

Developing Libraries – Transforming Communities: A Case Study of Andaragasyaya Primary School Library in Sri Lanka

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Abstract:

This paper provides how a rehabilitated school library in a tsunami affected village changed its community's lives. Due to the Asian Tsunami of December 2004 an estimated 150,000 lives were lost, and more than a million individuals were displaced. Libraries were equally affected by this tragedy. There is no doubt that enabling readers to return to their libraries can help them, both psychologically and practically, to cope with uncertainty and get back to normality. With this as a primary motivation, the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) took an initiative to rehabilitate few libraries in the southern and north-eastern regions of the country. Witnessing the devastation, the University of Missouri-St. Louis partnered with the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) to develop a tangible long-term project to build a sustainable future for children and communities affected by the tsunami through the Andaragasyaya School Library.

Whilst the commemoration of 10th anniversary of Asian tsunami falls in 2014, paper reports how the providing students with a range of educational experiences through library expanded their horizons and opened up new opportunities for their future lives. Further it reports the transformation of community's perception about the school library as well as education.

Keywords: Sri Lanka, Natural disasters, Library rehabilitation.

1. Background

On 26 December 2004 gigantic tsunami waves, triggered by an undersea quake in Sumatra, struck Sri Lanka, leaving a trail of destruction along the coastal areas of the North East and South. This was undoubtedly the worst natural disaster that ever hit the country. An estimated 50,000 lives were lost, leaving thousands missing. Everything in the way of the tsunami was reduced to mere rubble making millions homeless. Libraries were no exception, and most of the libraries in the eastern and southern coasts were either totally or partially destroyed.

Quite naturally, during the immediate aftermath of the disaster, providing basic needs relating to housing and reconstruction and restoring the livelihoods of affected people were given top priority by the official government agencies and other relief organisations. Understandably, with the limited resources available at the time, less attention was paid to satisfying the psychological needs of those affected, especially children. There is no doubt that enabling readers to return to their libraries can help them, both psychologically and practically, to cope with the uncertainty facing them and get back to normality. With this as a primary motivation, the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) being the only professional organization in the field of LIS in the country, decided to assist in the rehabilitation efforts by providing some mental stimuli to the affected people through the restoration of libraries.

According to official reports, 52 public libraries, around 160 to 170 school libraries and 68 other libraries were also severely affected. After visiting affected areas, the SLLA members selected a few libraries for their restoration project. The SLLA is a relatively small member based organization which had limited funds. For this reason SLLA's efforts to rebuild the infrastructure of affected communities had to be both focused and pragmatic. Thus the selection of libraries was done using two criteria. The SLLA initially selected four libraries where it could make the most impact and where there was a library building still standing even if all the collection, furniture and fittings had been completely destroyed. The other criteria used in the selection were the types of reader communities they serve and their geographical coverage.

Through the appeals sent both overseas and locally by the then President of the SLLA as well as donations from its own members, a considerable amount of money was raised. A major portion of funds to carry out the project came from Save the Children Fund (Sri Lanka)..

As very clearly stated in their project proposal, the SLLA's reconstruction effort was not merely one of replacing books and furniture. Instead their aim was to develop the library as a resource centre to facilitate and encourage resource based education. Further, their long term objective and effort was directed towards empowering the communities, particularly the young with facilities for information, which would in turn inspire them to work towards improving their lives.

After witnessing the successful progress of the SLLA library project with the four libraries (i.e. Thambiluvil School Library in Thirukkivil, the Children's Library of the Batticalao Public Library, Lukshman Thabrew Public Library in Balapitiya, Vidyaloka School Library in Galle) identified, many individuals and organisations extended their support to continue with the project. Instead of pooling the additional funds received and directing them to the four existing libraries, with the agreement of the donors, SLLA extended the project further by adding a few other tsunami affected school libraries to the project. These included Sirisumana Junior School Library in Rathgama, Sri Sudharma School Library in Galle and Andaragasyaya Primary School Library in Kirinda which were funded by the Career Development Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP, UK), Cambridge Library Group, CILIP and the University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL), USA respectively.

On the 10th anniversary of the Asian tsunami which falls in December 2014, this paper reports how providing the students of Andaragasyaya Primary School with a range of educational experiences through the school library expanded their horizons and opened up new opportunities for their future lives. Further, it reports on a transformation in the community's perceptions about the school library as well as on education.

The next section of this paper presents a brief introduction to Andaragasyaya Primary School along with an overview of the project goals of the SLLA, the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) and the school. It also describes the partnership created by the SLLA and details the activities and accomplishments to date. The next section briefly outlines the methodology employed. Drawing on both pre and post surveys, the subsequent section presents how the community's perceptions about both the school library and education have changed over the years. This is followed by the final section which discusses the limitations and lessons learnt that is useful for LIS professionals, community development practitioners and also for communities and policymakers.

2. Introduction to Andaragasyaya Primary School

Andaragasyaya is a small village, approximately 320 kilometres away from the capital city of Colombo on the deep southern coast of the island. SLLA members came across this village quite by chance as they cut across the hinterland to Kirinda in one of their many trips down South following the tsunami. It is really a village in the back of beyond. As a villager told us in a matter of fact manner ' few strangers venture this way - the few who do is because they missed the road. So we never see them again'. Villagers living in extreme poverty make their living mainly from fishing and paddy cultivation and some work for the salt-mines in the neighbouring town. The village was severely affected by the December 2004 tsunami. Both lives and livelihood were lost even though the Andaragasyaya Primary School was not directly affected by the tsunami.

This public school served about 51 students at the time SLLA identified it in early 2005. The school staff comprised of a principal and six teachers, including three who had worked as unpaid volunteers at the school since 2001. The school had two rows of buildings with temporary partitions used to create classrooms as well as the Principal's office. Only a section of one building had electricity in early 2005 but the supply has been disconnected due to unpaid bills.

There was no separate library in the school apart from a steel cabinet inside a classroom with around 20 books. The cabinet was also shared to store students' text-books, the volunteer teacher's record book and a set of files maintained by the volunteer teacher to record borrowings of library books. The SLLA members were impressed by the interest and efforts of the principal and volunteer teacher in providing library facilities for their students despite their less than ideal working conditions.

The SLLA was very keen on rehabilitating this school library under their project but it was not possible for them to do so due to the limited funds. However, through the intercession of Dr. Jody Miller, an Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, who primarily visited Sri Lanka to support another school library in the SLLA project, additional funding was received from UMSL to rebuild this library.

3. Project Overview and Goals

As stated earlier Andaragasyaya Primary School did not come under the purview of the SLLA's library restoration initially, but was identified as a worthwhile school to develop for several reasons. Firstly, the SLLA members were highly impressed with the dedication shown by the school principal and teachers towards the children who attended the school. Even with the extremely limited infrastructural facilities they had to work with at school, the principal and staff demonstrated a genuine commitment to furthering the education of their students. Thus Andaragasyaya was chosen because the SLLA was ensured of local support which was essential for the success of the project. Secondly, even though the children and their families were affected by the tsunami the school was not directly affected as it is located somewhat inland i.e. around 2 km away from the sea. For this reason Andaragasyaya Primary School was not eligible for targeted tsunami funds from the government and non-government agencies. Therefore, it was obvious that the school would benefit from the SLLA and UMSL assistance.

From the outset, both SLLA and UMSL were careful to choose a school where they could develop a long-term collaborative partnership because their goals extended beyond providing the school with basic supplies such as books and furniture. It was clear to them that successes will not come from merely replacing books and furniture but from offering continued programming at the school. Hence the main focus of the project was to provide students with a range of educational experience through the library which helps them to expand their horizons and open up new opportunities for their future lives (Miller, 2006). For the project to succeed, the participation and active engagement of the Andaragasyaya school teachers and students was essential. Considering the socio-economic status of the villagers, and especially the parents of their students, the principal identified four specific goals that he considered important for the SLLA project i.e. (1) provide opportunities to improve students' English language skills; (2) create educational workshops for students and provide opportunities through the library to carry out activities that help to identify and improve students creativity; (3) organise an educational trip to Colombo for 4th and 5th graders to give them exposure to a different cultural and educational experience; (4) create workshops for parents to emphasize the importance of education as most parents tended to rely on their children's support for their livelihood activities and looking after younger children.

In accordance with the University's mission to educate students about their interrelations with the rest of the world and their ability to make a difference in addressing global problems, in partnering with the SLLA and the school UMSL had two goals: (1) to include the university's students in the reconstruction effort, in order to foster their engaged global civic participation; (2) to develop long-term international exchange between UMSL and the educational community in Sri Lanka (Miller, 2006).

After witnessing its effectiveness as the project progressed, in August 2006 the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the US Library Associations of IFLA partnered with the Andaragasyaya project and provided financial assistance. In addition, several individual professionals (i.e. Edwina Smart, Carol Wootton and John Lake of CILIP) not only engaged in fund raising activities but also, as presented in the next section, actively participated in training workshops and other activities conducted for students at the school.

The responsibility of carrying out the project was assigned to a three member committee. The committee comprised of Jody Miller representing the UMSL, Nilu Abeyaratne, Assistant Lecturer, Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology to represent Jody during her absence, and myself representing the SLLA.

Understandably, the project initially focused on basic infrastructural renovations for which UMSL engaged in fundraising targeting their faculty, staff, students and administration. When sufficient funds were received from UMSL for the infrastructural renovations the project officially began in early August 2005. The first phase of the project was completed within a short time span of 2 ½ months. The abandoned room in a poor state of repair which was given for use as the new library was miraculously transformed into an attractive primary school library. The room was repaired, repainted and electricity was supplied. The library was furnished with specially designed colourful furniture which maintains the children's library standards. The collection was developed with colourful reading materials, which included children's literature, dictionaries, atlases and other eye catching informative reading material that would attract any child towards its precincts. The whole collection was catalogued and classified according to international standards and computerised. In addition a television, DVD player, computer, printer and educational videos were given to the library.

In order to train the librarians in managing the rebuilt library, the SLLA sponsored the two volunteer teachers who were responsible for maintaining the library, to follow the SLLA's Diploma in Library and Information Science Course. This was indeed a welcome step, as it demonstrated the total commitment of the project toward developing both the school and individuals. Additionally, three training workshops were held to train the volunteer teachers in basic IT skills and maintaining computerised library catalogues.

After the infrastructural renovations were completed in mid October 2005, art, music and storytelling sessions were conducted for the children to mark the occasion and also to focus on the second phase of the project (i.e. provide students with a range of educational experience through the library). A renowned musician and a very distinguished illustrator and an author volunteered to serve as local resource persons at the sessions. In addition to the local resource persons, Edwina Smart, then National Councillor for Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), UK and Regional Liaison Development Officer for the Career Group Wales and her husband John Smart attended the workshop. The goal of phase one of the project was achieved when the fully refurbished library was officially opened on 12 January 2006 with the participation of parents and members of the regional Ministry of Education.

The goals of phase two (i.e. to improve educational programming for students at the school) were achieved through the continuous partnership with UMSL, IFLA and CILIP. UMSL and CDG Wales, worked tirelessly to raise additional funds to carry out the activities of phase two. During the second phase, in order to provide opportunities to enhance their creativity, around ten art and music workshops were conducted at school for students with the participation of renowned artists, musicians, children's authors and illustrators. After conducting a few music workshops, providing students with a novel experience, a music and dance DVD entitled 'Dessert Blossoms' was created to showcase their talents.

As a result of art workshops conducted at school, children were able to create beautiful drawings. These drawings were reproduced and used to create handcrafted note-card sets and sold at UMSL and in the UK to raise project funds. Moreover, exhibitions of the students' art

were held at six locations in Missouri, England and Wales. Not only the students but the principal, teachers and parents were grateful and excited to know that people from countries so far away that they have never even heard of were interested in their work and that people they will never meet were supporting and investing in their future. The additional funds generated by students were used to make partition panels to separate classrooms. The students played an integral part in raising funds to develop their school.

Several story-telling workshops were conducted at school for the students as well as to train the librarians. The volunteer librarian continued story-telling sessions during the library period assigned for each class. Further, educational DVDs in the library stocks, acquired especially with the intention of improving students English language skills were heavily used during library periods. The Principal and teachers volunteered to hold after school classes to prepare students for the Grade Five National Scholarship Examination. Additionally, workshops were conducted for teachers to educate and train them on information literacy and to educate parents on the importance of education.

To facilitate the 3rd goal laid down by the principal, SLLA and UMSL organised an educational trip to Colombo. However, the project was unable to achieve this goal because of socio-political instability and suicidal bomb attacks that took place in the country, especially in Colombo during that time. A few weeks before the event which was planned for mid August 2006, in consultation with the regional Ministry of Education and the parents, the Principal decided to cancel the trip.

Apart from the above, all the other goals identified by the SLLA, UMSL and the School Principal were achieved by 2009. In 2009, the continuation of the project was officially handed over to the principal, staff and parents. To mark the occasion a grand art exhibition and a concert by the students were held.

There were a number of visible accomplishments/outcomes of the project to date. As evident from the school record-book, both the students' attendance and the number of students admitted to the school have gradually increased. The school library won second place at the annual district library competition held in 2008. This was a great achievement as it contested with the libraries of national schools which have access to better resources and operate at a higher level. Most importantly, two volunteer librarians obtained professional library qualifications. The school started to produce very good results at the Grade Five National Scholarship Examination. The Principal was able to get the parents' support for school development activities as well as attract other donors and sponsorships for the development activities of school which is important for the continuation of additional programming.

4. Methodology

A survey was conducted in early 2005 before the implementation of the project and in 2014 five years after the completion of the project. The objectives of the initial survey were to find out the socio-economic background of the students and parents, the prevailing status of the school and the perceptions of the principal, teachers, parents and students about their education and having a library. The principal of the school, two volunteer teachers, three permanent teachers, 35 students, 30 parents and a Zonal Education Officer were interviewed during the first survey to gather data.

A second survey was conducted to find out the current status of the former students of the school and whether there is a change in the perceptions of the principal, teachers, parents and students about education and access to a library. The former and current principal of the school, 3 teachers, the librarian, 10 past students, 35 current students, 40 parents, and a Zonal Education Officer were interviewed for the second survey. All the interviews were conducted at the school and by visiting the village.

Additionally, discussions with the school community (i.e. principal, staff, students and parents), observations made and field notes maintained during the various activities at the school during the period of the project: 2005-2009 were also used for this study.

5. Perception of the Community's about Their Children's Education and the School Library

The pre-survey data revealed that the Primary School was about to be closed as the annual student admissions to the school has been declining over the years and the daily attendance of the students was irregular and very poor. The authorities were considering shutting down the Andaragasyaya Primary School and transferring the students to a school located in the nearby village. At the time, the SLLA came across the school the principal was struggling to manage the situation. The interviews held with the principal, staff and Zonal Education Officer reported that '*villagers live in extreme poverty and they are not educated to understand the value of education*' as the main reasons behind this issue. This was further confirmed by the parents during the interviews held with them.

When asked why their children do not attend school on a regular basis almost all the parents went on to explain the hardship of their daily lives and their struggle to make a living. The parents relied on their children's support for household chores like looking after their younger siblings during the day time, when their mothers' occasionally get daily-paid work. The parents who are farmers revealed that during the harvesting season, the whole family, including children work in the fields as it is expensive to hire labour. What is clear is that children skip school because assistance in the families' subsistence activities is more important for parents than sending their children to school. The students interviewed also confirmed this as they gave the same reasons having to look after their siblings from time to time or helping their parents in the paddy (rice) fields for their irregular attendance at school.

Their negative views about education were clearly apparent in the interviews with the parents. The following excerpt was from one parent but many others also reported the same view.

'We live a very tough and difficult life. Occasionally I get work at the road rebuilding project. If I get absent then thereafter no work for me and also do not get paid. So some days there is no one to look after my small kids. So the older one stays at home to look after younger ones. What else can we do? We can't afford to lose our daily jobs or not working in the fields because it helps us a lot. Giving our children an education is good but after they finish school education they also have to work like us in the field or at salt-mine'.

Most parents were unaware that by educating their children, parents can help the children to overcome the hardships that they have faced and lead a better life. In other words, parents do not view education as an avenue to that helps to improve their children's future lives. For

this reason the principal very correctly identified ‘educating parents on the importance of educating their children’ as one of the goals that he wants to achieve through the project.

Students were asked what they want to be in the future. Amongst the professions students mentioned farmer, fisherman, army soldier and tractor driver were significant. This was not surprising as these are the only occupations practiced by the people they know in their small village. A very small number of students mentioned that they want to become teachers and two boys wanted to become a doctor and an engineer.

As described above under the introduction to the school, even though the school provided some sort of library facilities to students, it was obvious that neither the students nor the parents had a clear understanding about the library. When asked from both students and parents what they think about the school library, some students readily mentioned that *‘There is no library in our school’* whereas most parents reported that

‘There is no library in school but there is one in the town’.

This was not surprising considering the condition of the ‘library’ that the school maintained.

The following are a few summarised excerpts of the interviews which illustrate the school community's view about the library:

‘There is a library in town. People can read books and [news] papers’. – (Most Parents)

‘We can read books in the library’. – (Students)

‘We get books to read from Ramani teacher [volunteer teacher who looks after the library]’. – (Students)

‘Students read books in the school and sometimes I give books them to take home. I keep a record when they take home. We don’t do anything other than this – what else can libraries do... I mean other than this what else you do at libraries?’ – (volunteer teacher who looks after the library)

‘We don’t have lot of books in this small library. Students read books in the school and we allow them to borrow books. That’s all we do. Besides that what else should library do?’ – (Principal)

From above excerpts it was obvious that for the parents, students and the school staff the library is just a place meant for reading and borrowing books. Furthermore, it was also apparent that they did not even have a correct physical image of a primary school library. When the specially designed colourful furniture made according to the children’s library standards was brought to school to furnish the renovated library they thought that the school was getting a Montessori. Even the principal could not understand why book racks and reading tables and chairs were made to such a small size.

As described above (see project overview and goals) while working with them for nearly five years a number of training workshops and activities were held at the school to achieve the project goals. An increase in student enrolments and attendance and the enthusiasm of parents towards their children’s educational activities gradually became evident. The post-

survey data presented in the next section provides an account of how the school community's thoughts towards education and the library have changed over the years.

According to the former principal the library and the educational programming conducted through the library has helped immensely to raise the enthusiasm of both parents and students towards education.

'Because of the various workshops you conducted for students the parents also began to show a keen interest on their children's education. Those activities were a novel experience for all of us. We never had these programmes at school previously. If you can remember, later when there were activities at school parents came to school leaving aside their livelihood chores and stood behind classroom walls to watch their children's activities and creations. They couldn't imagine the talents that their children have'. – (Former Principal)

Parents too confirmed this during the interviews held with them.

'We didn't know that our children can do all these things [sing, dance, act, draw] so beautifully'. – (Kusuma, a parent)

'I was so surprised to see that my son can draw so nice pictures. I can't believe that his and other children's drawings have been exhibited in other countries like America and England'. – (Sirisena, a father)

It was revealed that not only children but parents themselves also benefitted from the activities conducted at the school. The following narration was from one parent but most parents shared the same view.

'Not only children even we learnt a lot from those workshops – about the world, various other opportunities that our children can have if we give them education. Thanks to those learned people who conducted workshops now we know that there's a different world beyond our village. Not only us, even those people had undergone difficulties like us'. – (Parents)

The school had around 51 students at the time the project began but by the time the project ended there were around 85 students. The current principal who took over the school just after the completion of the project in 2009 reported that

'Over the years the number of student admissions has increased significantly. Now we have around 178 students in our school. Not only Andaragasyaya villagers but parents in nearby villages also now try to admit their children to our school'. – (Current Principal)

This shows that there is a considerable increase in the student enrolment at the school. When asked whether there is any particular reason for this, the current principal's immediate response was

'The very clear reason is the wonderful library that we have and its resources'. – (Current Principal)

For the first time in the school's history it produced very good results at the National Year 5 Scholarship Examination in 2007 and since then the numbers of students who pass this exam have increased. The Principal and teachers reported that the increased pass rate has a direct link to the library as the library was not merely stocked with books but with other resources such as educational audio-visual resources. Amongst the past students who passed the scholarship examination and left the Primary School for further education, ten students are now studying for the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Examination (GCE – A/L). A considerable number of students are now studying for the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Examination (GCE – O/L) and a few others who have not obtained good results at their GCE-O/L have started working.

During their interviews both past and present students stated that in future they would like to be teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, computer programmers, artists and pilots. This was a significant change compared to the pre-survey as none of the students wanted to become fishermen, army soldiers and drivers.

Many students disclosed how the educational programming helped them in managing their lives. The following anecdote recounted by Lakmal is very significant:

'I sat for GCE (O/L) just once but could not obtain enough credits to follow GCE (A/L). Now I am working at [name of the 4 star] hotel as a security guard. When I showed them some of my drawings which I created during workshops at school they asked me to do a mural for the hotel. For that they gave me LKR 125,000.00 [around US\$ 1000.00]. Not only that now they want me to do another mural for the hotel they have in Colombo. So, though I couldn't continue my studies I still can earn an additional income thanks to those teachers who taught drawing at workshops'. – (Lakmal, Former Student)

At the exhibition held at the auditorium of the National School to mark the completion of the project the Zonal Education Officer was also surprised by the students' use of colours, proportions etc. He further stated that:

'because I am a regular visitor to this school I have seen their drawings earlier. Their usage of colours is very poor and limited. This is a marvellous improvement. In a way no wonder - because they have learnt all the techniques from such renowned, experienced persons'. – (Zonal Education Officer)

It was observed at initial art workshops that students always asked for only three colours i.e. blue, green and rust when paints were distributed among them. It was later realised that this was because these are the colours that they always see within their environment; blue sky and sea, green trees and the rust colour of gravel roads. It is apparent that the art workshops and watching educational DVDs in the library has increasingly expanded their limited world.

While expressing their high appreciation for the library in the school, many parents reported that their children even refused to go to the secondary school after completing their primary schooling. According to the parents, students have complained that there is no nice library with lots of activities like the one they had at the primary school. This clearly shows that students now expect something more than books from their library.

As revealed from the interview data all the parents collectively stated that

'not only our children even we were lucky enough to benefit from these workshops. Those eminent, famous people came to our village. We were able see them and talk to them. We still can't believe that they talk to us. We never thought that so many things can be done through a library. Earlier we thought library is for students and educated people who want to read books and newspapers'.

Further some parents disclosed that their children talk about a lot of other things that they do at the library such as story-telling sessions, watching films and playing games which they were previously not aware of. What is more significant is that most parents clearly showed a greater determination to educate their children.

'our lives have not changed much. In a way it's more difficult now than those days. But somehow we try our best to send them to school and provide whatever we can to educate them. If not they also have to suffer like us'.

The following narrative from the volunteer teacher who looks after the library clearly shows how her impressions about the library have changed with time.

'I have never known until I engaged with this project that libraries can do so many things other than providing reading facilities. Even during my school days I didn't have anything other than reading facilities. Also I have never heard of the subject 'library science' or the 'Library Association' or the 'library science diploma course'. I am glad that I followed the course. I can't believe that I have obtained professional qualifications even to some extent. I was already able to implement things that I learnt from the course even in a small scale and most of the time I use things that I learnt from the diploma course and also from the story-telling and information literacy workshops. Students love to come to the library and sometimes I can't send them off to close the library'.

The above narration not only illustrates the change of perception about the library but also the new career path it opened up for the volunteer teacher. Furthermore, the former principal also earned professional advancement partly due to his involvement with the SLLA project in developing the school. The former principal announced in the presence of officials of the Department of Education at the public gathering held to mark the completion of the project, that he was given a promotion to a national school in the town by the Ministry of Education with effect from January 2010. He further added that

'I must thankfully mention that I have got maximum marks at the promotional interview for the work I have done at the school mainly through this project. I was able to show officials about all the developments that took place through this collaborative project and how the school community benefited'.

It is apparent from the pre and post survey data presented above that the project has made significant changes to the community's perception about their children's education and about libraries. Therefore, it is clear that changes have taken place to help uplift the lives of people in a small rural community through the development of the library and through the educational programming associated with it.

6. Limitations and Lessons Learnt

This is a study of just one school library in a tsunami affected village in rural Sri Lanka. As such, the findings cannot be generalised to other libraries in the SLLA project or other similar projects. Yet, the findings and lessons learnt might be useful for LIS professionals, community development practitioners and also for communities.

The project was a success as it recognised from the outset the need to develop mutually beneficial relationships with all its stakeholders i.e. donors, SLLA and most importantly the Andaragasyaya school community. The goals set for the project were consistent with the desires of all stakeholder and were achieved through partnership.

However, it is important to note that the Volunteer Librarian is still, the Volunteer Librarian at the school. This is because after nearly ten years almost to date, neither the school nor the SLLA has taken any firm step or made an effort to take her case to the relevant higher authorities and give her a permanent appointment.

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