Inclusive Rural Development
the Moneragala Experience

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Rural Development
District of Moneragala

- Moneragala is the second largest and one of the poorest districts in the island of Sri Lanka
- Majority of the population live in rural areas
- Farming is the main livelihood of the people in Moneragala
- Population of persons with disabilities in Moneragala could be 8-10% and approximately 9.2% of the population are over 60 years of age.
- General accessibility in the district is low
The Disabled and Age Friendly City Concept

• The concept was developed by late Senarath Attanayake, Member of Uva Provincial Council, in the year 2011
• The first phase of the project joined the Global Age-friendly Cities Network in 2012
• ”An inclusive district where barriers for people with disabilities and older persons are eliminated”
• The concept encompasses improvements to the built environment coupled with social and economic inclusion
• The interface between ageing and disability is taken into consideration
• Heavy emphasis on the necessity for multi-stakeholder participation
Achievements in Moneragala

• Establishment of a unit at the Uva Provincial Council for planning and coordination
• Accessible built environment in the main urban areas (Public institutions, religious places of worship, community centres, health-care centres)
• Access to Education
• Access to the electoral process
• Livelihood support, self-employment, public sector employment
• Healthcare services (eye camps, health camps)
• Awareness and training
MO/Siyambalagune Primary Vidyalaya (School): A Success story

• Siyambalagune Vidyalaya was one of the schools in Moneragala where ramp access was built around the school with a fully wheelchair accessible toilet facility,
• The school was selected because there was already a student with a disability studying in the school,
• In addition to the ramps, the 10 year old schoolboy was given a wheelchair too,
• Now he attends school regularly,
• The accessibility features at the school attracted two more students with disabilities to be enrolled in the school: two girls aged 8 and 14 years respectively, both wheelchair users,
• There is also teacher with a disability who joined this school after accessibility was improved.
Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- The Presidential Secretariat of Sri Lanka is replicating the education component of the project in a few selected districts
- DPOs and other CBOs continue to advocate for access and inclusion
- The sensitisation of Public Officials benefits the community of persons with disabilities in the district

Challenges

- Provincial councils are under-resourced, hence the allocation of funds is low
- Lack of political will and commitment