

Barefoot marks Women's Day with 'Sari Connection' from Jaffna, Mullaitivu

An event was held at the Barefoot Gallery Colombo on Saturday March 4, to mark International Women's Day and showcase the 'Sari Connection' project and its unique products with seamstresses from Jaffna and Mullaitivu.

The 'Sari Connection' is a novel project that has made waves in the community and is implemented by a Japanese Non-profit organization known as PARC Inter-people's Cooperation (PARCIC) which is supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency JICA.

The project produces unique hand-crafted goods from up-cycled saris which are much in demand. Their products range from blouses and pants to bags, accessories, cushion covers etc which are very popular items in the communities. The products are created by women living in Jaffna and Mullaitivu - two conflict affected and tsunami-hit areas in the north of the country - whose lives have been transformed by their engagement in the project.

Through this project, used saris are collected as donations island-wide and those saris are refashioned into beautiful clothes and accessories by women groups in the North. The revenue generated through sales of these products helps to improve the livelihood of those women. The products are gaining attention especially in the tourist market, and expanding its sales channels to major souvenir shops, such as Laksala, Lakpahana and Barefoot Galle.



Three seamstresses from the project spoke about their experiences and demonstrated how they make bags from used saris.

Selvaranchini from Jaffna said the project was a great boon for her to support her family and her old parents by herself as a single woman who has lost most of her close relatives.

The project gives hope for women like her, and an opportunity to express themselves through these sewing activities. Pushpalatha from Mullaitivu said that learning various stitching techniques has given her a lot of confidence as a seamstress.

A team from Singer (Sri Lanka), represented by Koshitha Peramunugamage, head of Singer Business School, donated two boxes of used saris to the project, and provided two sewing machines for demonstration on the day. "Sari Connection" is collecting all kinds of used saris. Contact sariconnection@parcic.org for sari donations.