



**PROJECT PROPOSAL ON**

**REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF PREGNANT GIRL CHILD**

**VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE**

**AND**

**PROTECTION OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE UNBORN AND**

**NEWBORN BABIES**



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## 1. Introduction

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Sarvodaya Suwasetha Sewa Society Ltd. is the social services arm of Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya (Sarvodaya), founded by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne in 1958. Sarvodaya, as it's popularly known works primarily for the upliftment of isolated rural sector population guiding them towards personal, social and economic empowerment.

For nearly four decades, Sarvodaya Suwasetha Sewa Society Ltd. has acted as a pioneer in the social welfare landscape of Sri Lanka, committed to the cause of effecting a life transforming change in infants, children, disabled persons and elders in our country who are in need of love, care and protection. At present, there are 9 child development centres including Nutrition Centre, Leela Jayasekara Child Development Centre and Ma Sewana Teenage Mothers' Home, 6 pre-schools, 3 elders' homes, 2 centres for the disabled, 4 special education units and several other special programmes in operation across the country.

Our 5 year strategic plan encompasses 6 main Strategic Directions.

## Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction 1	Protecting and Empowering Children
Strategic Direction 2	Empowering Adolescents and Youth
Strategic Direction 3	Enabling the Disabled
Strategic Direction 4	Honouring the Elders
Strategic Direction 5	Building an Enlightened Society
Strategic Direction 6	Capacitating the Organization

## Table of Contents

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1. Introduction .....	2
2. Background .....	4
3. Main Objective .....	5
4. Project Beneficeries .....	5
5. Project Discription.....	6

<b>Strategic Action 1</b>	Creating a loving caring, and secure healing Environment
<b>Strategic Action 2</b>	Promote pre and post natal health, nutrition and well-being of the teenage mothers
<b>Strategic Action 3</b>	Provide access to counseling, psychotherapy and psychiatric treatment
<b>Strategic Action 4</b>	Enhance Opportunities to engage in leisure, recreation aesthetic activities
<b>Strategic Action 5</b>	Promote Acquisition of IT and language skills
<b>Strategic Action 6</b>	Introduce and implement a plan to reintegrate the child victim into her family, school, community and society to lead a meaningful life

## 2. Background

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The tendency to institutionalize teenage mothers who have been victims of different forms of sexual abuse within the Sri Lankan society has been steadily increasing in the last few years. In this context a great responsibility is thrust upon institutions such as Masevana established in 2001 to provide shelter for victims of rape and sexual abuse who become pregnant as a result.

The commitment of Suwasetha is not merely to offer them food and lodging but to invest in their mental and physical health and empowering them to overcome their traumatic experience and motivate them to proceed with confidence and strength to make a success of their lives. Today, the facility provides residential care for 20 young mothers providing them an all round service to build up their broken lives until the confinement and the subsequent integration into society. The services and activities are funded by individuals as well as organisations both local and foreign.

Over a period of 16years of its existence Masevana has provided protection and care for 261 mothers and their babies. During their period of institutionalisation at Ma Sevana they are encouraged to lead a normal life as they are still carefree young teenagers.



Their daily routine includes attending to their own personal hygiene and the hygiene of their babies, cleaning of living quarters, and participating in different classes to keep up with their interrupted schooling so that they could continue their studies after re- integration. At the same time skill development in sewing, bakery work, handicrafts is organised for them while computer training and English language lessons are offered as knowledge and competency in both would enhance their employment prospects. Enjoyment and leisure is guaranteed through music and dancing sessions and special cultural festivals are organised within the premises to take their disturbed minds away from their traumatic experiences. Celebration of religious festivals pertaining to different religions is done to make them aware of the need for tolerance in a multicultural society.

Spiritual programmes are held on a monthly basis to create a sense of love towards the baby and the physical health of the mother and the unborn and the new born babies is cared for through a nutritious diet and constant health, clinical post and antenatal care. Four care givers ensure their comfort, two nurses visit them regularly for health checkups and a security personnel is on duty throughout the day as the teen mothers need protection.

Psycho spiritual wellbeing of the teenage mothers is intensely focused on by providing access to regular counseling. Psycho spiritual healing programme organized at Vishva Niketan Meditation centre also facilitates the healing process. The children with further therapeutic needs are referred to hospital based therapeutic support.

The programme of work and services for the year 2017 has been planned according to the Suwasetha Strategic plan 2015-2020.

### 3. Main Objective

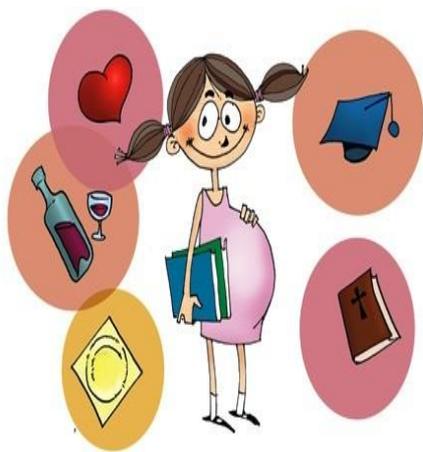
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#### Rehabilitation and integration of pregnant girl child victims of violence and protection of health and well being of the unborn and new born babies

The teenage mothers in the age range of 12-18 years reside at the centre. Most of them have been school girls and very often wish to continue with their education after confinement. Since they have been victims of distress, an attempt is made to provide them with a clean, pleasant and soothing living environment. A series of strategic actions are planned for the year 2017 to ensure their well-being, protection and care.

### 4. Project Beneficeries

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Teenage Mothers



Unborn Babies



New Born Babies

## 5. Project Discription

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### 5.1 Strategic Action 1

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#### Creating a loving caring, and secure healing Environment

The inmates are provided protection by enlisting the services of a security officer but there has arisen a need for reinforcing the present structures to provide the inmates with protection.

#### Activities

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##### 1.1 Raising the height of the boundary wall with barbed wire fencing

All these years the home and its premises have been protected by a boundary wall and it was not a problem until recently, as the land at the back of our home was unoccupied. Presently there is a building being constructed in the adjoining land and possibilities for security threats exist in the near future. Construction activities and later the occupation of the building will create a security threat to the inmates who are parties in legal cases.

##### 1.2 A toilet facility for the sickroom

A sickroom was allocated for the pregnant mothers and their babies last year as they are in a delicate state of health and fall sick often with communicable diseases. For an example Ma Sevana faced with a crisis situation when the inmates were infected with chickenpox a few months ago which was controlled with great difficulty. Although the facility was equipped with a sick room unavailability of an attached toilet betrayed the purpose of establishing the sickroom itself. The sick and normal children using the same toilets result in spreading communicable diseases. Such circumstances highlight the urgent need of adding a separate bathroom.

##### 1.3 A comfortable and well organised living facility

One of the immediate needs in the kitchen and pantry area is equipping the kitchen with pantry cupboards. It would help to keep the kitchen equipment and the pantry top clean and well organized.

#### Outcomes

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-  Threats to the lives and freedom of the inmates from the conniving perpetrators as well as neighbours prevented.
-  The privacy and well being of the teenage mothers ensured.
-  A clean and healthy sick room for the mothers and babies provided
-  A well equipped kitchen for the daily chores performed by the teen mothers ensured.

### 5.2 Strategic Action 2

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#### Promote pre and post natal health, nutrition and well being of the teenage mothers

The number of referrals from courts has been steadily increasing and clothing has to be supplied for the mothers and the new born babies. A pack of new clothes is gifted to the inmates when they are reintegrated into society.

## **Activity**

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### **2.1 New clothes for the inmates**

With continuous new admissions to the centre and the reintegration happening constantly, the new comers need to be provided with adequate clothing, linen and other sanitary needs etc. and this necessitates the purchase of these items once in three months. As young girls still in their childhood they need clean clothing and in addition during cultural and religious festival seasons it is necessary to make them contented with gifts of clothing.

## **Outcome**

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-  Pleasant and clean attire for inmates provided.
-  Mental health and joy and a sense of belonging among teen mothers created.

## **5.3 Strategic Action 3**

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### **Provide access to counselling, psychotherapy and psychiatric treatment**

The teenage mothers referred to Masevana having undergone worst forms of abuse, rape and subsequent trauma have different mental conditions and psychological needs. Very young mothers of 11-12 years have no sense of responsibility towards their own self or the baby that they are supposed to taken care of. Being at a very young age they are under extreme trauma, stress and confusion. Coping with physical and emotional changes that are occurring at a speed pace itself is an overtly difficult task for them. The dilemmas they are faced with especially in relation to their decision making role regarding the baby's future worsens this condition. They are in need of regular counselling and sometimes even more in the form of psychiatric treatment at hospitals for them to be healed first and then encouraged to face life. Services of a very experienced Senior Counsellor and another counsellor are obtained to closely work with children facilitating the healing of their traumatised hearts and minds.

## **Activity**

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### **3.1 Group and Individual Counselling**

The resident teenage mothers are counselled on a group basis by the counsellors while at the same time the services are offered to them individually as and when necessary. The teenage mothers are encouraged to express their thoughts verbally or by writing them down as a cathartic activity to overcome their emotional distress. They are prepared for physical and emotional changes that need to be expected during and after pregnancy. Coping strategies to deal with their own emotions is devised with their active participation during regular sessions while helping out in their decision making on future endeavors. They are prepared to face the court process with courage and effectively participate in the decision making process of their social reintegration. Rekindling their

hopes for a better future is especially focused on to counteract the despair and hopelessness that they are often overwhelmed with.

## Outcomes

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- ✚ Mental trauma minimised and teenage mothers empowered
- ✚ A Teenage mother with a positive viewpoint on life ahead
- ✚ A healthy mind to extend love and bonding with the baby assured
- ✚ A strong and courageous personality moulded to actively and effectively contribute in making decisions on her own future and the future of her baby

## 5.4 Strategic Action 4

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### Enhance Opportunities to engage in leisure, recreational and aesthetic activities

As young persons the teenage mothers enjoy being children despite their predicament. They are encouraged to engage in play and leisure within limitations and they delightfully indulge in creative writing and leisure reading.

## Activities

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### 4.1 Library Facilities

Replenishing the library with additional books for enjoyment as well as character building and acquiring knowledge is expected. The chief Librarian of Sarvodaya will plan additional activities related to library usage.

### 4.2 Annual Variety show

An annual talent show presented by inmates of all Suwasetha units will be held at the end of the year. It helps to break the monotony of their daily lives, to instill self-confidence and showcase their skills.

## Outcomes

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- ✚ An opportunity for teenage mothers to enhance their knowledge and develop the reading habit is provided.
- ✚ The teenage mothers are introduced to meaningful leisure activities.
- ✚ An opportunity to display their talents provided

## 5.5 Strategic Action 5

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### Promote Acquisition of IT and language skills

The Suwasetha effort to ensure that the teenage mothers, once integrated into society, will be empowered to seek employment and be independent has manifested in the form of computer training and language learning classes which will be continued in 2017. At the same time the younger mothers who wish to continue with their studies will continue to receive coaching in the core subjects to ease their return to school.

## Activities

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### 5.1 Computer literacy

A vocational instructress will coach the inmates in computer skills both theory and practical. The lessons will be continued this year too while extra lessons have to be organised for the new comers. The inmates will be introduced to surfing the internet safely.

### 5.2 English lessons

The approved visitors to the centre are mostly representatives of funding agencies and the conversation is always in the English Language. Acquisition of English language skills will help them to speak with the benefactors and also help them to have a strong CV in their quest for employment.

The classes are very popular and on the request of inmates plans are afoot to extend the number of hours of English learning in the year 2017.

## Outcomes

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- ✚ Computer knowledge to learn more about the world and acquire an additional modern skill to empower themselves assured
- ✚ Information Technology skills acquired
- ✚ 3 Acquisition of skills in a second language ensured
- ✚ Improved access to employment guaranteed
- ✚ 5 Assistance to the management to computerise information, writing official letters etc, extended

### 5.6 Strategic Action 6

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#### **Introduce and implement a plan to reintegrate the child victim into her family, school, community and society to lead a meaningful life**

The young mothers are referred to Ma sevana for the pregnancy and child birth, after which the girls are reintegrated into society. Suwasetha plans to give back them their lost confidence and self worth, encourage them to continue their interrupted education process or empower them through vocational training if they plan to seek employment.

## Activities

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### 6.1 Preparing for formal education

Most teenage mothers prefer to go back to school and sit for the GCE ordinary Level examination. Hence special coaching classes are held within the premises for them in the core subjects to enable them to join the mainstream without much stress. The process of networking with relevant departments such as the Department of Probation and Childcare, Education, Department of Examinations and the Principals of schools in the vicinity to help those inmates who wish to sit for the GCE examination while in residence will be continued this year too. They will be provided with extra coaching classes and study material will be made available through the library.

The inmates who wish to go back to school after reintegration will be gifted with clothes for uniforms, school equipment and stationery, shoes and school bags when they leave Masevana.

## 6.2 Re-integration

Those teenage mothers who wish to engage in self employment will be assisted with basic equipment and raw material in a package that will help them to start a self employment project. Those interested in IT will be provided extra coaching with special classes engaging the computer instructress to work additional hours.

## Outcomes

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- ✚ Continuation of the education process which was rudely interrupted ensured
- ✚ Confidence and ability improved through classes in core subjects
- ✚ Opportunity to rebuild their lost lives through income generating projects encouraged