

Chandani

Chandani from Wadduwa sells brooms, which she bought from people who made them. She sells each broom for about 25 rupees (US \$0.25), selling about 20 brooms a day. She keeps these brooms on her head and walks the whole day in the hot sun until she has sold all 20 of them, earning Rs 500 (US \$5) a day out of which she spends Rs 70 on the bus.

Her husband is hearing impaired and physically challenged and is unable to do a regular job. She has four daughters and one son. The whole family survives on just this Rs 430 ; that's money for food, medicine, schooling, everything.

Dilly describes her work with Chandani

I first met Koshika when she brought brooms to our house, we started by simply talking and eventually became friends. As I got to know Chandani, I found her to be a very hardworking woman. In spite of all her hardships, she is always with a smile.



When talking to her again one day, I asked her why she didn't make brooms herself and she said she didn't have the initial investment to buy the equipment and materials. I asked her if she would like help and she agreed. I spoke to Yasmin and we decided to buy all the materials to start a small cottage business.

On June 30, my husband, Sunil, and I went to Wadduwa to buy the materials and equipment for her. There was a woman selling materials at the market and the look on her face showed what a hard life she must be living. She was a tsunami victim with two kids. I felt by trying to help one person, indirectly we helped so many others too by giving them business.



We returned with the materials to Chandani's house and helped them set up the equipment. When we returned later to visit, we saw the whole family, husband and children, making brooms!

Chandani can still go about her usual business selling brooms which she is very good at. They were so very grateful to us for helping them become self-sufficient. Chandani and her family now have a very successful small business. They are saving money and have even started fixing their house. One day while I was visiting, Chandani told me, "Now we can eat to fill out stomachs."

How we raised the money

This is a classic example of giving a family a fishing rod to fish instead of buying fish for them. Yasmin told me that for her birthday, in place of gifts, she asked her family to donate money for this family. It took just Rs 20,000/= (less than US \$200) to help them change their lives. Imagine all the good we can do with just a little compassion and generosity.

- Dilly Weeraratne, MagéLanka

