



REACH

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Creating enabling environments

“

...to fetch water

very early in the morning

Oh! Grandfather, it is very

difficult for me

My pot never fills up fully

The sun rises and also sets

by the time I return

Unable to collect

even one pot-full of

water.”

Rajasthani Folk-Song



A Message From Gap Inc.

Dotti Hatcher
Senior Director Social Community Investment

In many cultures, women are responsible for the collection of water for the household. In addition to being extremely time consuming, the collection of water can expose women to negative situations. Attacks against women can occur in remote areas. In many countries access to clean water is often non-existent. Children die as a result of waterborne diseases, or they are too sick to attend school. High concentrations of iron in the water table restrict farmers from raising healthy crops to support their families. Where clean water is plentiful, it is often not treated as a valuable resource.

Our partnership with Brandix allows us to address some of the burdens shouldered by women around the world. By providing access to clean water through community wells, time spent collecting water is minimized, allowing more time for other activities and less worries about waterborne diseases that can cause serious health issues and even death to her children. Education and training on protection of this valuable resource leads to a brighter future for us all.

We are grateful to Brandix for their vision - WATER, a commodity more precious than gold!

From the Brandix CSR Centre

It has been four months since the publication of the first issue of REACH, in May this year. We are happy to report that we have had lots of positive feedback for the newsletter and our projects over the past months.

The Brandix - Water Resources Board Water Management Centre at Korakahaweveva in Anuradhapura has gained momentum. As reported in the previous issue, we are working with the University of Peradeniya and the Water Resources Board for the development of the curricula. A comprehensive programme for teachers on awareness of water issues has been

developed. The construction work for the Centre is due to be completed at the end of October and ceremonially opened in November. Whilst the Water Resources Education Centre, Vancouver has expressed interest in working with the Centre, we have also invited other interested organizations to join hands with us and optimise the use of the facilities in related community development projects.

A key initiative over the past months was the completion of our employee survey to ascertain the water needs of our own Associates. From this survey we have found 950 of our

Associates and their families are in need of water. As an initial step, over the next few months we will be focusing on meeting the water needs of 150 of these Associates. The preliminary work for these projects has already begun.

We congratulate Brandix Casualwear-Seeduwa, Brandix Intimate Apparel-Mirigama and Comfortwear - Watupitiwala for their wonderful performance at the All Island Safety Awards 2006. We look forward to exciting months of community development in the run-up to the New Year.

UNDP Partners with Brandix for humanitarian assistance



Mr. Feroz Omar and Mr. Abu Selim at the signing

UNDP and Brandix Lanka Limited, the single largest apparel export company based in Sri Lanka, signed two cost-share agreements worth USD 23,810 [LKR 2,381,400] at the UN Head Quarters in Colombo on June 16, 2006. These funds will be utilized in the water and sanitation sector in post-tsunami recovery and reconstruction. Mr. Abu Selim, UNDP's Country Director and Mr. Feroz Omar, Board Director of Brandix Lanka, signed the partnership agreement.

The funds raised by these two cost-share agreements would benefit tsunami affected communities in Kattankudi in the Eastern

Province and Lunawa Moratuwa in the Western Province. A Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) is to be established in Kattankudi. Sanitation has been a major concern in Kattankudi which is said to be one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Waste water flows into the lagoon untreated; the lagoon is one of the major sources of livelihood for the people of Kattankudi. The plant would serve as a first step towards mitigating pollution, which has a direct negative impact on livelihood and health of the people in the area.

It is noteworthy that the Kattankudi WWTP project is linked to a large-scale water and sanitation project done by the Coca-Cola Co. The comprehensive project involves rainwater harvesting, better hygiene promotion and bio-cell filtration apart from the WWTP that Brandix is supporting.

Brandix is also providing an internal water supply network for the UNDP housing project in Lunawa, Moratuwa, benefiting 100 families. Apart from the infrastructure support, Brandix is providing capacity building support for the beneficiaries as part of their involvement with UNDP. They will be working with the same community to give them basic livelihood related tools that were lost in the tsunami while working with the community on 5S principles, energy saving strategies, environmentally friendly community development strategies and basic waste management skills.

These two projects will be channeled through the UNDP's Housing Project, which is constructing or repairing 414 houses in the districts of Jaffna, Trincomalee, Galle, Colombo (Moratuwa) and Kalutara. UNDP actively encourages participation of the beneficiaries themselves in the construction/repair of their housing.

At the signing, Mr. Abu Selim said partnerships with the private sector are relatively new for UNDP Sri Lanka. He said 'We will continue to seek and encourage more joint ventures such as this one with the private sector in our humanitarian work in Sri Lanka'.

Mr Feroz Omar said Brandix chose to work with UNDP because of its vast experience in development activities in all regions of the country sans discrimination. Mr. Feroz Omar added 'We are encouraged by this rare opportunity to bring in our expertise from the corporate sector to the development field'. The head of Corporate Social Responsibility for Brandix Lanka, Shamilka Samarasingha said that they were happy to partner with UNDP because of "UNDP's accountability and transparency structures which allows for efficient implementation of projects along with responsible monitoring and reporting to beneficiaries and donors alike".

Courtesy: UNDP Communications Unit

Clean Water and Sanitation for Brandix Communities

Brandix is indebted to the communities that have contributed immeasurably to our growth over the years and we are dedicated to reaching out to the communities in which we operate. We firmly believe in supporting our communities and have initiated several projects to improve their conditions.

Over the past four months the Brandix CSR Centre has focused on providing clean water and sanitation to several such communities. We have had many successes in helping hospitals, schools and houses, benefiting thousands of people.

We went to the aid of hospitals in Awissawella and Makandura, as part of our continued efforts to ensure improved standards of health and hygiene in our communities.

Awissawella is home to Brandix Casualwear (BCA) and many of our Associates. The Awissawella General Hospital is located 3kms from the BCA plant and provides healthcare to the public. The hospital has a capacity of 350 - 400 in-patients and treats 800 - 850 out-patients daily. The hospital has an Intensive Care Unit, an ENT Unit and an Emergency Unit. We found that some wards did not have adequate boilers to provide clean drinking water. We provided the

hospital with five boilers to fulfill this need. A boiler was allocated to each ward with a capacity for 60 people. We also provided 10 plastic garbage bins at the request of the hospital authorities.

We believe in the vital importance of education for the development of our organisation and society. Accordingly, over the past few months Brandix has contributed to the development of schools in Pannala, Minuwangoda, Eheliyagoda and Ahangama.

The Government recently proposed that schools provide children with lunch to help fight malnutrition. The Kalawana Junior School in Gampaha has a hundred students. The school is located close to Brandix Intimate Apparel - Minuwangoda and approximately 200 of our Associates live in the area. The school was in need of a new kitchen to comply with the Government's proposal, and Brandix undertook to build them one. We also helped them clean an existing well, which had fallen into disuse and improve their water supply system.

The Mitipola Vidyalaya in Ehiliyagoda, is 35kms from BCA. Fifteen Brandix Associates live in the area and about ten of our Associates are past pupils of the school. The school currently has 160 students. The school lacks a water supply and adequate

sanitation facilities. Drinking water is not available, and the toilets are not fit to be used. Brandix has undertaken to provide the school with much needed drinking water and is building five new toilets

Brandix has also extended its support to the Dombara Maha Vidyalaya, Ahangama, an area where about ten of our Associates live. The school has 300 students. We provided the funds to add doors and make other minor improvements to the buildings. We are also teaching the students 5S, which they will implement in school and in turn teach the methodology to their families and neighbours.

Our commitment to the re-development of tsunami victims around the country by providing water supply and sanitation systems for new housing schemes built for resettling the homeless and re-building their livelihood is on-going.

Focus on Pannala

Makundara in Pannala is home to the Brandix Textiles plant and approximately 150 of our Associates.

The Makundara District Hospital provides healthcare to the surrounding area. The hospital has five wards and a total capacity of a 110 patients. We found that the hospital did not have pure drinking water since the hospital well, its only source of water, is contaminated with faecal bacteria. We provided the funds for the drilling of a deep well on the premises to supply water to the entire hospital.

The Pannala National School provides education to 3,000 students. Many of our Associates and their children have attended this school. The school desperately needs improved toilet facilities and a Public Address System. A project is underway to provide 15 new toilets and to repair 23 existing toilets. We will also provide a new PA system to the school.



Book donation at Pannala National School, in association with the INGO Room to Read.

The Brandix CSR Centre and Brandix Casualwear Ratmalana have initiated a welfare project in the suburb of Ratmalana to provide tools to semi-skilled individuals, to help them regain their livelihood. We are also working with the Community Concern Society and developing a Training Centre to impart machining skills to those interested in joining the apparel industry.

We also assisted tsunami victims in Galle. The Association for Aid and Relief, Japan had funded a tsunami housing scheme of 30 houses in Atankitha, Imaduwa Galle. However, the new housing scheme lacked a water supply system. Brandix funded the construction of a water supply and distribution system by the Green Movement Sri Lanka; this included the provision of a well, a water tank, a distribution system and a retaining wall for the thirty families housed in the scheme. We also provide capacity

building support for the beneficiaries with the involvement of the Brandix Activewear Koggala plant. Our Associates will be working in the community and school in the locality to provide basic livelihood related tools that were lost in the tsunami while working with the community on 5S principles, energy saving strategies, environmentally friendly community development strategies and basic waste management skills. The project was ceremonially inaugurated on August 3, 2006 by the Hon. Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe.

The Brandix CSR team continues to seek ways and means to give back to the communities that have contributed to the Group's success. We look forward to every new opportunity and challenge that the future will surely hold for us.



At the inauguration ceremony in Galle

Brandix Partners Reebok and Rotary to Provide Water



As part of our 'Water is Life' outreach programme, Brandix worked with Reebok India and the Rotary Club of Colombo East to bring safe drinking water to the people of Lunugamvehera, Sri Lanka.

We found that the people of Lunugamvehera had to travel over two kilometers by foot to obtain safe drinking water. Brandix sponsored 'Fashion Statement 06' which was organized by the Rotary Club of Colombo East to raise funds for this project.

For a project costing USD 6,300 (Rs 630,000), the people of Lunugamvehera now have access to pure drinking water via a water tank which has a capacity of 2,000 litres, with provision to increase this capacity to 10,000 litres. A cultivation well which had previously been used for drinking water but had fallen into disuse and disrepair, was also cleaned and renovated. Thereafter, a pump house, water tank and a structure for holding the water tank was constructed and the connecting pipelines were laid to the village. Approximately 100 villagers benefited from this initiative.



Brandix takes Gold at the Industrial Safety Awards

Brandix bagged three awards at the Industrial Safety Awards 2006 in recognition of our efforts in minimising risks and occupational hazards at the work place. The awards ceremony was held at the BMICH on August 25, 2006.

Brandix Casualwear Limited, Seeduwa carried away the grand prize - the All Island Safety Award for large-scale companies, while the first runner up in the same category was our joint-venture Comfortwear Limited, Watupitiwala. Brandix Intimate Apparel Limited, Mirigama won a Merit award.

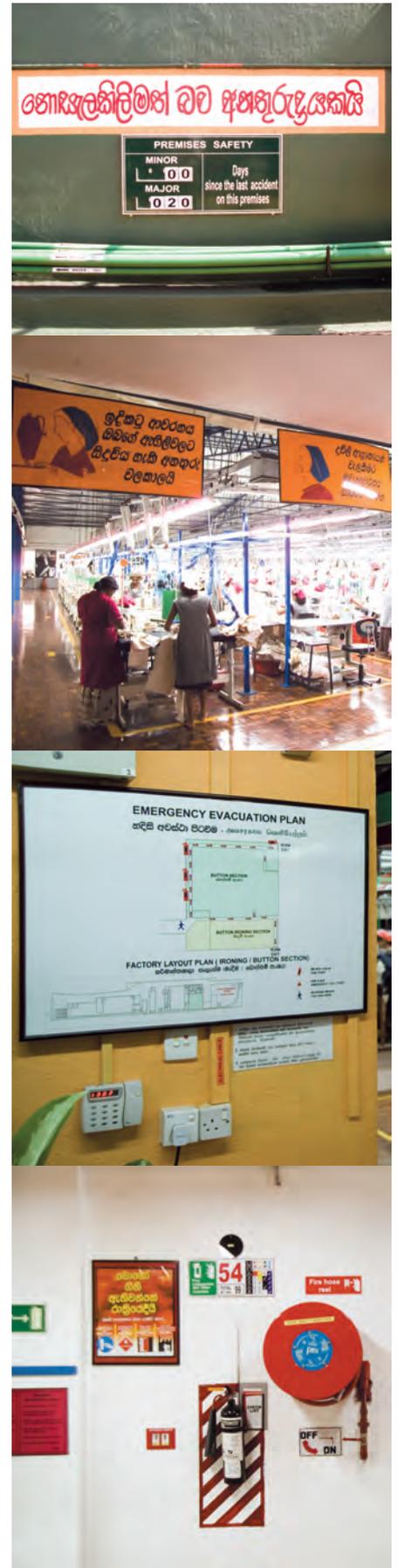
The event was organised by the Industrial Safety Division of the Department of Labour and was sponsored by the Industrial Safety Equipment Company (ISEC). Applications were called through the media and organizations in the manufacturing, service and construction sectors were eligible. A total of 164 applications were evaluated by a committee comprising a Group of Senior Engineers from the Industrial Safety Division, of the Department of Labour.

There were three main categories for the

awards - small, medium and large scale. Provincial awards were made depending on the numbers of competitors from the various provinces while the selection for sector awards was dependent on the number of applications.

A stringent audit was conducted by the panel to verify the information submitted by the applicants. The audit included the inspection of workplaces, conducting interviews with the management and obtaining photographic records. Compliance with the Factories Ordinance and major risk factors outlined in the criteria for evaluation was considered.

The All Island Safety Award is awarded in recognition of a company, which has taken significant steps to manage safety and health risks at the work place as well as using risk assessment to eliminate or reduce risks at work. It is also to encourage companies to go beyond minimal compliance. The promotion of safety awareness and accident prevention also yields results and rewards that are better measured not in rupees and cents or statistics, but in the immeasurable enrichment of a countless number of lives.



“ Safety excellence means business excellence. No company can truly excel until safety becomes a way of life and a way of doing business. ”

Jim Forsman, Vice President & General Manager, DuPont Safety Resources



The Hon. Kumar Welgama, Minister of Industrial Development presented the All Island Safety award and the first runners up award for the large-scale category to the jubilant Brandix team. Addressing the gathering Minister Welgama said “I congratulate all those who emerged as winners in the Industrial Safety Awards 2006. This shows the commitment and the determination of all participants in their pursuit of promoting a safe work culture.” He went on to say “The winners no doubt understand that occupational safety is vitally important for business. Companies that have a strong record with safety know that that reflects positively on business”.

Our vision is ‘to be the inspired solution for branded clothing’. In this quest we believe that inspiration begins with our people and their safety is our number one priority. Accordingly, across the Group we have initiated several employee benefit schemes beyond those that are legally mandated to

increase both the productivity and motivation of our workforce. These include employee assistance schemes relating to education, housing and health. Brandix is also an equal opportunity employer that firmly respects the rights of our 18,500 Associates.

The company is also a member of the Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production (WRAP) Certification Programme and firmly adheres to its principles, ensuring that apparel is produced under lawful, humane and ethical conditions. We also follow SA 8000 social accountability standards and were recently awarded the Occupational Safety & Health Assessment Series (OSHAS): 18001:1999, an accreditation that encourages continuous improvement in workplace health and safety.

Brandix Textiles Builds Homes for Makandura

Brandix Textiles is the only woven Textile Dyeing & Finishing Plant in Sri Lanka and is a key solution provider to the country's apparel segment. It is located in Makandura Industrial Zone in Kurunegala District. It is a woven fabric supplier to global brands such as Marks and Spencer, NEXT, Gap, and others. Brandix Textiles is engaged in a number of social projects in the area, further strengthening its relationship with the surrounding community. Currently 75% of its 700 employees are from the surrounding area.

Brandix Textiles owes much to the Pannala community for the significant growth and global recognition it has experienced over the years. This year, the Chief Thero of Makandura Sri Saranankararama Temple, Ven. Mudugalle Mahanama Thero, helped it extend its gratitude to the community. The Management committed to support three families living in abject poverty in close

proximity to the plant. Having visited the three families and seen their appalling living conditions, Brandix Textiles decided to build a house for each of them within a timeframe of just ten working days.

The task was entrusted to the factory management & the employees and within ten days the first house was built. There was absolute participation and if not for the support extended by Brandix Textiles associates in terms of both masonry and carpentry efforts the ten day challenge would have been an impossible task to achieve. The house was ceremoniously handed over to Mr Sirithilake and his family on July 11, 2006.

Brandix Corporate Social Responsibility extended their support and ensured all funding was made available for Brandix Textiles to embark on the above project. This is just one of the many efforts made by Brandix to further reiterate their commitment to community based social investment.



Overcoming Disabilities in the Workforce

Work of decent quality is the most effective means of escaping the vicious circle of marginalization, poverty and social exclusion. People with disabilities are frequently trapped in this vicious circle, and positive action is required to assist them in breaking out of it. Barriers which differently-abled people face in securing jobs and taking their place in society can and should be overcome through a variety of policy measures, regulations, programs and services. The differently-abled program at Brandix, promotes equality of opportunity and treatment for persons with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation, training and employment.

The Brandix Casualwear, Seeduwa, is a case in point. The plant is one of the oldest among the Brandix facilities, and is located at Seeduwa, North of Colombo. A school for differently-abled persons is based in the vicinity. Twelve of the Associates are disabled, most of them

absorbed upon requests from the school.

We make every attempt to help these Associates blend comfortably into the Brandix family. They have their own team, with a team-leader. An in-house counsellor and her team is always available to hear their grievances and offer help and tend to any special needs they may have. We also have a differently-abled Associate in our Welfare Team ensuring that their needs are met.

Brandix is committed to ensuring equal treatment of our differently-abled Associates in terms of position, salary and grading. We also ensure that they work in a friendly environment that is free from discrimination, where they mix freely with their colleagues. The factory staff has been trained to ensure the equality of all its workers. Some of the ongoing programs at the factory are the Graduation Ceremony upon completion of the

training school, Parents' Day on the 1st Saturday after payday, the differently-abled Associates' Family Support Program, entertainment, welfare facilities, and monthly visits by teachers from the differently-abled school to ensure all differently-abled Associates' needs are fulfilled.

At Brandix we are aware of the abilities and strengths of our differently-abled Associates and the valuable contribution they make to our community. Our differently-abled Associates employees have not allowed their disabilities to dampen their determination to get the most out of life. They have varied interests and strengths - we even have a karate champion among them. Their success stories are an inspiration to us all.

Our differently-abled Associates all express one wish; that is to be treated just like everyone else. We at Brandix are happy to comply.

Profile: Shiroma Lakmini



*Designation - Machine Operator
Service since - 1997*

Shiroma Lakmini, a machine operator from Kurunegala, was born deaf into a family of eight, inclusive of herself. Her comfort zone while growing up revolved around her parents (who are not disabled), her two sisters who are both deaf and three brothers of whom two are unable to communicate.

The person most dear to her was the brother who was able to communicate. He is now a black belt karate master in the UAE. Her deepest desire was to walk in the footsteps of her brother and teach Karate. However, that dream ended when her brother convinced her to focus on other goals - more suited for a girl! However, growing up she watched and learned from her brother, a skill she practices even today.

Considered a tom-boy among her peers, but yet like any girl she has had her share of heartbreak with boys, but the love and togetherness of her family and hostel life which gives her a sense of independence makes her strong. Shiroma also excels in sports such as swimming and volleyball. A fitness fanatic, she exercises regularly in her room at home. She also likes shopping, dressing up and computer training.

Her impatience to finish the interview and go back to work was a clear sign of a person driven to succeed. She looks forward to having her own family one day. Shiroma lives by the rule of not hurting anyone around her. With her infectious enthusiasm, Shiroma is indeed an inspiration to us all.

“It is a waste of time to be angry about my disability. One has to get on with life and I haven't done badly. People won't have time for you if you are always angry or complaining.”

Stephen Hawking The Guardian (UK) September 27, 2005

Profile: K.J. Chandra Perera



*Designation - Chief Mechanic
Service since - 1987 (Rtd. 2006)*

Chandra Perera had worked 10 years as a mechanic before joining Brandix Casualwear Seeduwa at its inception. His first job was to use his 'magic hands' to re-build 75 old machines and bring them to a useable condition; a task he succeeded at doing on his own.

Eight years into his service the man who was known as the 'God of Mechanics' met with a cruel twist of fate - a roadside accident, while taking his wife and three-week-old son to church. He lost a leg and an arm in the accident. His wife also lost a leg.

At his hour of need Brandix put together a foundation that provided him with physical therapy and a fulltime nurse. He was also allowed to retain his position as Chief Mechanic overlooking 800 machines in 1995 - a position he retained till he retired this year.

Despite the obstacles it was a cheerful and content Chandra who told us his story. He also sends us this message, "Appreciate what you have, don't take it for granted, it's more important than you think."

“The world is full of suffering but it is also full of people overcoming it.”

*Helen Keller,
American activist for the disabled*

Brandix Initiates Marks & Start

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is the UK's leading retail store with 15 million people visiting each week. M&S has had a relationship with Sri Lanka spanning more than 15 years, both with suppliers working in partnership with us, and through the M&S office based in Colombo. The company recently signed an agreement with Brandix Lanka to help rebuild our nation.

Marks & Start is M&S's award winning flagship community programme and the UK's largest

company-led work experience schemes. In recognition of their outstanding contribution in helping differently-abled people find work around the world M&S was recently awarded the Employability Award at the Business in the Community's annual Awards. Launched in 2004, it gives the opportunity of work experience to people of different ages and walks of life, allowing them to try out a job and giving them the confidence and skills to enter the job market. It has offered work experience to people who face

barriers getting a job, including the homeless, the differently-abled, lone parents and unemployed young people.

Marks & Start and Brandix have come together to help Sri Lanka's differently-abled population find jobs and ensure that they work in a suitable environment. This program has done wonders for the community where equality has been emphasized regardless of race, gender or disability.



Our differently-abled Associates at Brandix Casualwear, Seeduwa with the Counsellors.

Contact us with your comments / suggestions

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