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ALLIANCES IN ACTION

EASY SEVA SRI LANKA

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Income inequality is severe in Sri Lanka, with striking differences between rural and urban areas. Nationally, high youth unemployment and poverty rates reflect the challenges of generating economic growth and new job opportunities. Furthermore, after more than 25 years of conflict, the entire country is once again under government control, but the conflict-affected North and East require extensive investment to stabilize and develop those regions. Economic opportunities, especially in the agriculture and fishing industries, have been impeded by the conflict. In addition to these challenges, much of Sri Lanka is still picking up the pieces after the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which killed 32,000 people, displaced 443,000, and caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In Sri Lanka, information and communication technology companies are looking to expand their networks into remote rural areas and build their customer base. As of 2007, less than 6% of rural households own personal computers. Given this, there is a large and untapped market of customers who want access to the internet and computer training, but businesses don't have the resources to operate internet centers themselves.

APPROACH

The Easy Seva Partnership innovated a "Telecenter-in-a-Box" franchise model, which provided local entrepreneurs with all the equipment and resources needed for setting up a successful business. Four personal computers, headsets, a router, and a 3G modem lay the groundwork for entrepreneurs to open an internet center in targeted villages and communities. The Easy Seva centers provide customers with wireless internet access, personal computer usage, and broadband telephone services such as Skype. In addition, some centers will provide online training opportunities and a place where residents can receive microloans and other banking services. The Easy Seva centers provide customers with wireless Internet access, personal computer usage, and broadband telephone services. In addition, some centers will provide online training opportunities and a place where residents can receive micro loans and other banking services.

PARTNERS



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RESULTS

- The initial project opened 50 telecenters across rural Sri Lanka.
- Dialog Telekom has added additional services to the original model and plans to expand to 100 new locations.

Fast Facts

START: 2007 END: 2009

PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS:

Wireless internet access, technical assistance and expertise, technology

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