
IDP vocational training enhances development efforts

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By Don Asoka Wijewardena On the instructions of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Vocational and Technical Training Ministry set up a number of vocational training centres at Manikfarm and Kadirgamar Welfare Villages to help impart different trades to young men and women who are sheltered as internally displaced persons. Internally Displaced Persons from Kanakarayankulam, Nedunkarni, Killinochchi, Ottusudan, Mullaitivu, Kachlaimadu, Pulliyankulam, Palai, Paranthankulam, Pudukudueruppu, Selvapuram and Chravil areas have sought refuge in the two welfare villages, the Vocational and Technical Training Ministry said. Vocational and Technical Training Minister Piyasena Gamage told The Island Financial Review that he had instructed the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) to immediately set up vocational training centres in IDP villages because these IDPs had not been able to undergo any vocational training programmes for the last 30 years due to the conflict. The latent talents of thousands of young men and women had been relegated to limbo and the time had come to utilize their abilities for the economic development of the country. He pointed out that it was a great step forward taken by President Rajapaksa to develop human resources of the North and East. Had the country utilized the talents and abilities of young men and women in the North and East for a worthy cause Sri Lanka would have been self-sufficient with technically qualified personnel. Referring to the different vocational training programmes introduced for the IDPs, Minister Gamage said that training on sewing of ladies, children and gents wear, electricians, welding, motor mechanism, construction and computer technology had been going on a daily basis for the unemployed young men and women. Kanapathi Gunaskaram, an IDP, said that the LTTE had created a bad image of the Sri Lanka army, 'but we were convinced that the Sri Lanka army treated us as brothers. We were able to reach the government controlled areas because I have three children and their education is my concern', he sighed. Another IDP, Sunethra Kasthuriarachchi, said that although her name was Sinhala she could not speak Sinhala because she was born in Mullaitivu. The tailoring instructor Kandayya Rathnakumar interpreted what Ms. Kasthuriarachchi wanted to say. Ms. Kasthuriarachchi said that they were from Tissamaharama and had to live in Killinochchi as her father had a bakery over there. 'When the security forces captured Killinochchi, we were brought to Manikfarm Welfare Village where we heaved a sigh of relief. The training programmes introduced for the IDPs were extremely helpful for the future of thousands of young men and women. These men and women who were obsessed by fear of unemployment would be able to contribute their labour and knowledge for the development of the country in the near future. Tailoring instructor Kandayya Rathnakumar said that he was born in Ratmalana and had been in Killinochchi for the last 10 years as a tailor. He had been able to earn about Rs.30,000 per month. When asked whether he was asked to sew LTTE uniforms he said that the LTTE never asked him to sew uniforms for the organizations as the LTTE had employed separate tailors to do the job. He owned a juki machine, Olock machine and some textiles but during the capture of Killinochchi all his personal belongings were destroyed. Rathnakumar added that the vocational training programmes introduced by the government would be a boon to all unemployed young men and women stranded due to military operations carried out. It was a sensible decision that the government had taken on behalf of IDPs sheltered in welfare villages at Manikfarm and Kadirgamar villages. Courtesy: Island.lk