



EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH HANDLOOM

LEELA WEAVING STATION:

Introduction

Leelawathie, a skilled artisan with 40 years of experience in the handloom industry, embarked on her entrepreneurial journey four years ago in Puthukudiyiruppu, Eastern Province. Starting with a single loom, she has expanded her business, Leela Weaving Station (Leela Nisavu Nilayam), to employ 7-8 staff and operate five looms.

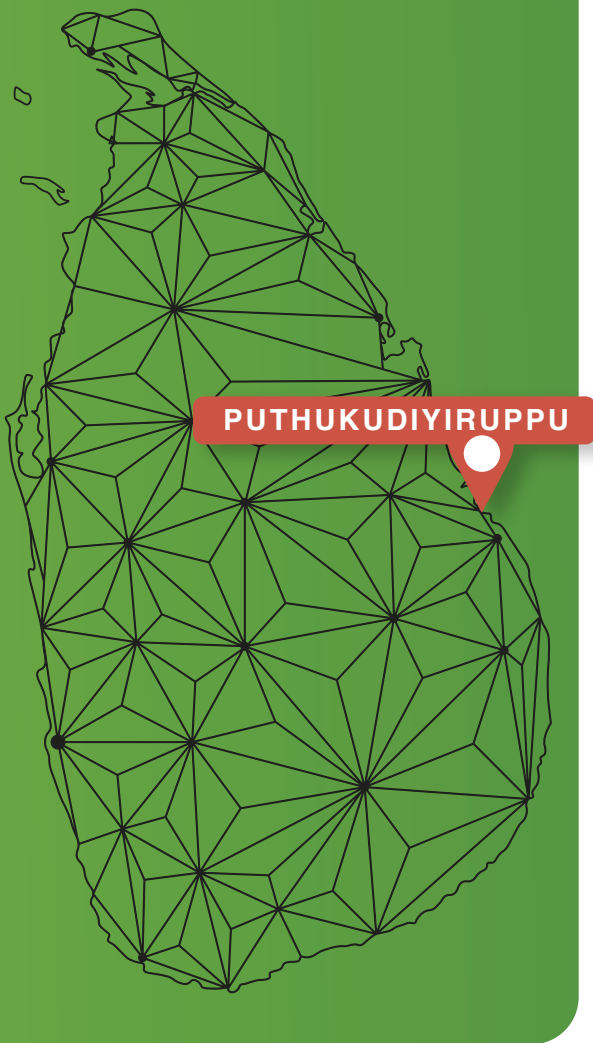


The Catalyst for Growth: DevPro's Holistic Support

DevPro's comprehensive support played a pivotal role in Leelawathie's success. DevPro provided one week and five days of intensive design training. This immersive experience exposed Leelawathie and her daughter to new techniques, patterns, and trends, empowering them to create innovative and marketable designs.

Additionally, DevPro supplied Leelawathie with high-quality Amaravathi thread, renowned for its durability and vibrant colors. This combination of skill development and material support equipped Leelawathie to produce exceptional handloom products that quickly gained popularity in the market.

Before receiving DevPro's support, Leelawathie struggled to sustain her business, feeling isolated and uncertain about how to grow. Her income was inconsistent, and the challenges of competing in a market where she had little visibility often left her feeling discouraged. However, after DevPro's intervention, she not only gained the technical skills and high-quality materials needed to elevate her products but also found a renewed sense of confidence and purpose.



Quality Products and Expanding Markets

As a seller in a rural area of Sri Lanka with limited marketing resources, Leelawathie adopts simple yet effective marketing techniques such as word-of-mouth referrals and utilizing community networks to spread the word about her products. Leelawathie also plans to develop an online retail business to reach customers in Colombo and enter the wholesale market, supplying her sarees to boutiques and retailers. These expansions and marketing techniques aim to boost sales and establish her brand in new markets.

Empowering Women and Building a Legacy

Leelawathie's ambition extends beyond her own success. She aims to provide employment opportunities for more women in her community and hopes to pass on her knowledge and passion for handloom weaving to her children.

Navigating Challenges and Embracing the Future

Despite facing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and a minor eye ailment, Leelawathie's determination and adaptability, bolstered by DevPro's support, have enabled her to overcome obstacles and continue growing her business.

40

YEARS
of Experience

07

SAREES
Per Day

MONTHLY INCOME
LKR 30,000+
for Leelawathie

LKR 3,500
PER SAREE

7-8 NO. OF
EMPLOYEES

06
NO. OF
LOOMS

KEY PRODUCTS
Sarees, Sarongs, Tops,
Shirts, Lungis

Gratitude for DevPro's Guidance

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The one week and five day design training provided by DevPro was a game changer for me. Now I can sell one of my sarees for LKR 3,500

With our team's combined effort, we can produce around 7 sarees per day. If there's an order for 50 pieces, we can complete it within 3 to 4 days.

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About DevPro:

DevPro is an independent not for profit organization with the vision of 'A world where development is in service of equality'. DevPro is built on the 30 years' delivery and legacy of Oxfam in Sri Lanka. Company's work revolves around Climate Resilient Inclusive Economic Development in the areas of Agriculture, Tourism, Climate, Tech and Education, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH). DevPro currently has 5 regional offices with its head office situated in Colombo, Sri Lanka. DevPro's overarching mission is to create Inclusive Economic Development and the approach adapted would mainly be Market System Development (MSD) in the main pillars the company would work on.

About RIES (Resilient & Gender Inclusive Enterprise System):

The RIES project is built to focus on agriculture-based enterprise's development, women's economic inclusion and engagement with the private sector. There is an increased focus on improving access for farmers and small and medium enterprises to national and international markets, providing opportunity for value adding and increased prices for products.