

Senior Citizen Meeting January 16th 2017

On Monday January 16th, the initial meeting of the Senior Citizen Club was held at Galle Community Centre. Elders signed in and were greeted by children with red Anthurium flowers. By 2.30 pm, ten men and nine women were seated ready for a welcome by Gayani and Kumari. People introduced themselves with a game of catching the ball, and one man volunteered a song.

Eshani and Lahiru performed the traditional dance ‘*La dalu bopath hemin salena se*’. This is the story of Prince Siddhartha telling his wife, Yasodhara, he needs to leave her and their son to become a monk and seek the Way and the path of enlightenment.

Elders were invited to discuss with ECSAT staff the different activities they would like to do at the club. Large pictures round the room gave ideas ranging from making handicrafts, sports, cooking and reading stories. All the elders had long conversations with the staff, and their comments were written down next to each picture.

The vocational group of beneficiaries made roti as part of their training in cooking skills. This was offered to everyone with plain tea. Everyone looked joyful and relaxed and the room was filled with the buzz of conversation. Some of the elders knew each other, and others were making new friends.

Roshan, the Programme Director, thanked everyone for coming and explained the idea about the club as a social meeting place to provide an extra interest in their lives and meet different members of the community. He said the idea for this club came to him during his four month Fellowship in the US, and he decided to start a Senior Citizen’s Club as his follow-on project. He hoped to see everyone at the next meeting and asked them to encourage others to attend.

The next meeting is on Wednesday February 1st at 2pm and everyone would vote on a name for the club.

Roshan would like to give sincere thanks to his host organisation in California, World Institute on Disability (WID) and the IREX team. They were very hospitable and provided wonderful support and many opportunities for him to extend his knowledge about services available for people with disabilities. He has returned to Sri Lanka with new ideas and a network of new friends.





Figure 1: A collage of photos at the Senior Citizen's Club Meeting.