

June 2009 case study of Sia, ICFS Matru Project

Sia

Sia is a middle aged woman who lives in Matru. She cares for four abandoned children aged 9-11 years old. Sia and the children were registered with the Integrated Child and Family Support programme in February 2007, having been recommended by our local Management Committee, which is made up of people from the community. The Committee was very concerned about the family's poor condition, and they met all the criteria to join the programme.

The family lived in a dilapidated four bedroom mud house with a battered corrugated metal sheet roof. The walls were cracked due to water leaking through the roof. The doors and windows were damaged, and would be stuffed with dry banana leaves and old cloth at night. The dwelling lacked toilet and cooking facilities and there was little furniture, with no beds for the children.

Sia's main source of income to feed the family was from petty trading in local foods, but she didn't have enough capital to establish a substantial market. The family had a small garden, but lacked access to basic tools and seeds to grow food crops. Her husband, who was old and sick, had a little oil palm plantation which only provided a small additional income to supplement her budget.

The difficult situation they lived in caused Sia to become extremely stressed and this would often lead to tense situations with members of the family and their neighbours. The two youngest children were not attending school and one of the young boys was suffering with an eye condition.

Since joining the programme in 2007 many positive changes have happened to Sia and her family. Sia was supplied with seeds for harvesting and now has a seed bank for the food crops she grows. She was able to buy gardening tools from the proceeds of her first harvest and her income has improved dramatically.

The family now sleeps in a well protected house after the roof, windows and doors were all repaired. Sia has received counselling, and maintains a good relationship with her family and immediate neighbours. She also involves other family members with her gardening, which she didn't do previously. All the children are close and are praised by other members of the household and the neighbours for being helpful.

The family's health also improved noticeably through access to medical facilities and the young boy's eye condition was treated after a referral by the programme's nurse to the eye clinic in a nearby town. The two younger children started school and all four children have received educational support over the past two years.

The family has now been assessed and is ready to leave the programme, as their living conditions and Sia's ability to maintain the household have improved greatly. After two years on the programme, Sia says she feels confident that she will be able to continue supporting the children from where the project stops. The team will continue to be available to advise Sia to ensure the progress made is sustained.