

# Mannar Donkey Management & Welfare

Report #6 to Animal Aid Abroad, April 2015



Through strong partnerships with like-minded groups like Animal Aid Abroad, people in Mannar are being re-sensitised to love and care for donkeys. Thanks AAA for being part of this important collaboration.



Robin feeds the donkeys eggplant from the vegetable vendors

## Donkey feeding and taming program

- Robin delights in his 'donkey work'. Naturally generous and loving, Robin showers both attention and effort to ensure many donkeys are fed daily. In the urban area where food continues to be scarce, Robin carries on his daily feeding of donkeys both for households which have adopted donkeys and also for the donkeys at our temporary sanctuary.

Both Robin and Kelvin continue to tame and train donkeys. Currently this is proving a challenge because many areas of the sanctuary are under water due to unseasonal rains.

# Mannar Donkey Management & Welfare



## Donkey Assisted Therapy (DAT) Centre

More than two years ago Bridging Lanka staff had discussions with MARDAP (Mannar Association for Rehabilitation of Differently Aabled People) about establishing a Donkey Assisted Therapy (DAT) program to improve the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of disabled children. After seeing positive research results from Europe about donkey therapy, MARDAP agreed to work with us, together with the help and expertise of Donkey Sanctuary India (DSI). An MOU was drafted with the centrepiece being the construction of a DAT centre.

**DAT Centre foundations are dug**



Two years hence, on 24<sup>th</sup> April, the Divisional Secretary Musali, director and staff of MARDAP and staff of Bridging Lanka witnessed Fr Victor Sosai, the Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Mannar, lay the cornerstone of the new building at a special ceremony. Blessings and prayers were offered for the DAT centre – which will be the first of its kind in Asia.

**The special cornerstone ceremony in Murunkan**



**Changing children's minds** - the general practice in Mannar is for parent to indoctrinate their children to believe everything negative about donkeys. Hence a severe dislike and fear of these wonderful animals. Bridging Lanka staff members are working to change the mindset of children. Visiting schools and conducting awareness programs are augmented with inviting children to visit our temporary donkey sanctuary and asking them to touch and groom the donkeys. The opportunity to be physically close to and handle donkeys is resulting in major shifts in their attitudes and emotions towards donkeys.