

The background of the cover is a light blue watercolor wash. A single feather, with a gradient from dark blue to light blue, is positioned in the upper right quadrant. The text 'ANNUAL REPORT' is centered in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. A thin horizontal line is placed below the text.

ANNUAL REPORT

2018

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA

Vision

A peaceful and just country in which freedom, human and democratic rights of all people are assured.

Mission

To work in partnership with different target groups to educate, mobilise and advocate building a society of rights-conscious citizens and a political solution to the ethnic conflict and equal opportunities for all.

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About NPC

The National Peace Council was established in 1995 by an inter religious group of civil society leaders during the height of Sri Lanka's internal war to promote a peaceful end to the conflict.

The mission of the organization was, and remains, to engage in public education and advocacy so that solutions that are fair and just by all ethnic and religious communities may be found with people's participation.

Today NPC works in partnership with different groups including religious clergy, community leaders, government officials, women and youth and students to educate, mobilise and advocate for a peaceful and just political culture in which there will be equal opportunities for all.

Honorary Members of the Board of Directors

Dr. Joe William (Chairperson)

Mr. G. V. D. Tilakasiri (General Secretary)

Dr. Jehan Perera (Executive Director)

Professor T. Jayasingam (Joint Treasurer)

Professor M. S. Mookiah (Joint Treasurer)

Professor S. H. Hasbullah (Director – until August)

Venerable Buddhiyagama Chandrarathana Thero (Director)

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa (Director)

Honorary Members of the Governing Council

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Mr. Javid Yusuf

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Ms. Saroja Sivachandran

Mr. M. H. M. Niyas

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Mr. A. W. Hilmy Ahamed

Mr. Suresh Dayantha De Mel

Rev. Fr. T. Rohan Dominic

Mr. Rohana Hettiarachchi

Ms. Christobel Saverimuttu (Company Secretary)

Honorary Programme Advisor

Ms. Sumadhu Weerawarne Perera

Staff Members

Dr. Jehan Perera	Executive Director
Ms. Chithrupa Vidanapathirana	Manager Administration
Mr. Rukshan De Zoysa	Manager Finance
Mr. Robinson Thevasagayam	Accountant
Mr. Saman Seneviratne	Project Manager
Ms. Venuri De Silva	Project Manager
Mr. Nishantha Kumara	Project Manager
Mr. Vijayanthan Thusandra	Project Manager
Mr. Rangika Wickramage	Project Manager (joined August)
Ms. Rasika Seneviratne	Assistant Project Manager
Mr. Samsudeen Safi Nayaj	Project Coordinator
Mr. Nagaratnam Vijayakantan	Project Coordinator (joined March)
Mr. Lakshan Perera	Project Coordinator (joined September)
Ms. Shanika Wimalasiri	Acting Project Coordinator (February to July)
Mr. Shantha D Pathirana	Senior Project Officer
Mr. Uwais Mohamed	Senior Project Officer
Ms. Saummya Amarasinghe	Senior Project Officer
Ms. Nirosha Anthony	Senior Project Officer (joined January)
Ms. Subhashini Navaratnam	Senior M & E Officer
Mr. A.M Razeen	M & E Officer (joined January)
Mr. Sanka Galagoda	M & E Officer (joined November)
Ms. Gayathri Sebaratnam	Assistant M & E officer (joined January)
Ms. Harshani Priyanka Adika	Account Assistant (until January)
Ms. W.A.D.T. Dilrukshi	Account Assistant (joined February)
Mr. Maduranga Dias	Account Assistant
Ms. Gayathri Selvagumar	Account Assistant (joined June)
Ms. W.G. Nelum	Officer Administration (March to December)
Ms. Madhuwanthi Rubasinghe	Project Officer (until January)
Mr. J.N. Gayan	Project Officer (until February)

Mr. M.H. Mohomad	Project Officer (until April)
Ms. Kaushalya Weerakoon	Project Officer
Mr. Ansari Mohomad	Project Officer (until July)
Ms. Diana Joseph	Project Officer (joined January)
Ms. Kethma K. Wickramasinghe	Project Officer (joined January)
Mr. Shameen Seneviratne	Project Officer (January to August)
Ms. Yashoda Piyumali	Project Officer (joined February)
Ms. A.M. Hemilda Mercy	Project Officer (joined February)
Mr. Anton Medosan Perera	Project Officer (joined February)
Ms. Geethika Nisansala	Project Officer (March to August)
Ms. Shanika Vimalasiri	Project Officer (August to December)
Mr. R. Kalaiventhan	Project Officer (August to December)
Ms. Mugunthini Vishvalingam	Project Officer (joined August)
Mr. S. Prabhakaran	Project Officer (August to December)
Mr. A.K.S.M. Yushri	Project Officer (joined September)
Ms. Ayesha Jayawardhana	Project Officer (joined November)
Mr. Kingsly Rajasingham	Project Officer (joined November)
Mr. Sumudu Jayasooriya	Administration Associate
Mr. S. Meril Karunajeewa	Administration Associate (joined October)
Ms. M.G. Priyanthi	Office Aid (Temporary)

Chairperson's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the annual report and financial statements of NPC for the year ended December 31, 2018. The year was a fulfilling and successful 12 months for NPC. Established in 1995, NPC has continued to remain faithful to our mission to build a strong foundation among communities towards a nonviolent attitudinal and behavioural transformation for just and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka.

NPC also has a strong grassroots network of peace animators mobilised through our programmes. NPC has the ability to conduct programmes tailored according to need, which are complemented by staff with ability to implement programmes effectively. Most of our staff are field-oriented and work closely with community-level groups and help take our messages of peace, reconciliation and nonviolence to their local communities.

The array of achievements recorded in this annual report highlights our accomplishments with the activities implemented by us over the past year. This is a manifestation of NPC's work abiding by our mission and vision. The report also includes testimonials of people we reached out to and let their voices be heard.

NPC's core strength in today's context is its balanced approach and its readiness to engage with all parties, but without compromising on our principles. An example is our advocacy strategy in the form of media releases we issue on a regular basis that capture events that we believe would contribute to the national reconciliation process.

NPC has goodwill and respect due to our commitment to a just and mutually acceptable political solution to the ethnic conflict. NPC's regular analysis and comment on the socio-political situation in the country through its media releases and its Executive Director's regular column in the press has ensured a continued visibility for NPC.

As a result of the confidence NPC has generated with the donor community nationally and internationally, we were able to obtain financial support to expand our work in the country, for which are grateful to them. We especially note the volunteer contribution of our Programme Advisor, Sumadhu Weerawarne, to the success of our programme development, fundraising and management.

We are also grateful to all our programme and management staff led by our Executive Director and to our volunteer Board of Directors and Governing Council members for their support and commitment to help us fulfil our mission.

We look to the future with hope and inspiration.

Joe William, PhD

General Secretary's Message

In 2015 the two main parties came together in alliance to solve the major problems facing the country. The people hoped yet again for a better future. However, like leaders of the past these leaders tried and failed to deliver on their promises. Previous leaders too failed for over 60 years starting with the first decade after independence. In particular, the national government could not reach the target of a permanent constitutional solution to the national question. In this context, NPC appreciates the judiciary's actions to solve the political crisis.

The way forward is through a new constitution giving equal rights to all without discriminating against or favouring any particular ethnic or religious group. NPC believes that with the introduction of a new Constitution and adherence to the Rule of Law, Sri Lanka can build a nation on a foundation of consensus and collective vision. NPC works closely with Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities to enable them understand each other and maintain ethnic and religious harmony, overcoming a majoritarian hegemonic mentality.

I wish to thank the members of the Board of Directors, Governing Council members, staff and our foreign friends and donors who give material and non-material support to fulfill our difficult tasks in this period. I believe that NPC is a vibrant civil society organization playing a leading role in building up a Sri Lankan Nation with support and commitment of all. It is to be noted that long lasting solutions to Sri Lanka's problems must come from within us.

G. V. D. Tilakasiri

Directors' Report

The year under review presented major challenges to the country, to sections of its people and to civil society. The first was the anti-Muslim riots that took place in Kandy in March 2018. The failure of state institutions, especially the law enforcement agencies, to respond adequately and rapidly pointed to the weakness in governance that manifested itself later in the year during the Constitutional crisis that commenced in October. The importance of civil society organizations that are committed to pluralist and democratic values were highlighted by these two incidents in particular.

The response of NPC and its partners to both these crises demonstrated the importance of training and capacity building. The Kandy District Inter Religious Committee (DIRC) immediately went to sites of violence, liaised with the police, held media conferences to urge the end of violence and established a Citizens' Truth Commission to investigate the truth behind the riots. This report has been widely disseminated amongst political, religious and civil society leaders. Likewise, during the Constitutional crisis that took place in October, NPC and its partners mobilised opinion-forming sections of the population to take a stand against arbitrary political actions and in favor of the rule of law.

This annual report provides a summary of the large number of activities undertaken by NPC, its partners and community groups associated with them to improve inter-community relations on the ground and to strengthen the national reconciliation process. The project titled Initiating Multi-level Partnership Actions for Conflict Transformation Project supported by Misereor and CAFOD resulted in 37 national level religious leaders, 135 district level religious leaders, 27 journalists, 38 youth, 451 university students, 105 religious clergy, and 3,703 members of the public participating in events raising awareness on topics of Transitional Justice, good governance and Constitutional reforms.

The Religions to Reconcile project supported by USAID resulted in 48 Peace Delegates being trained on conflict transformation and 1,488 target group members, including youth, being trained on using sports and arts skills for peace and reconciliation activities in their localities and 8 DIRCs carrying out 14 mitigatory interventions to address community level conflicts. In addition, 40 community cohesion activities were carried out to enhance community relations with over 1,500 community members participating.

Under the Accountability Through Community Engagement and Initiatives for Transition project supported by the EU, Human Rights First Aid Centre (HRFAC) desks operate in 11 districts supporting victims of human rights abuses to seek redress for their grievances with 314 volunteers providing victims and communities with advisory and counselling support to address rights abuses, and with 45 volunteers at HRFACs trained as befrienders to provide basic counselling support for victims seeking support through HRFACS. This has led to 206 complaints on rights violations received at the HRFACs forwarded to the Human Rights Commission for action and 79 complaints received forwarded to the National Police Commission for action. In addition, 14 cases were filed under the Right to Information Act (RTI) to seek information on rights violations and 38 RTI cases were filed to seek information on civil matters.

The Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for Long Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka project, supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, saw 500 students from 11 state universities and 400 community level youth from 21 districts receive training on capacity building, making connections and engaging with peers and policy makers on meaningful and positive dialogue and becoming internal mediators. In addition, 1,536 youth, including 802 females and 254 war victims countrywide used their enhanced knowledge and capacity to address issues of human rights violations and past abuses through mechanisms at their level.

The Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom project supported by the US State Department has obtained the participation of 75 representatives of community based organizations and civil society organizations on Local Inter Religious Committees (LIRCs) platforms across eight districts at the divisional (sub-district) level. In 2018, trainings were conducted for more than 300 community leaders in pluralism, conflict transformation, non-violent communication, mediation and rule of law. Thirteen community level inter religious issues were addressed by the committees and 25 follow-up activities took place in their respective localities in the form of discussions, mediations, community engagement interventions and advocacy sessions targeting the public.

The Technical Assistance to Justice Institutions in Sri Lanka project supported by the US State Department and implemented in partnership with Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) led to the establishment of a pool of 35 Master Trainers who conducted ten awareness programmes on Transitional Justice for 698 community leaders including government officers, youth leaders and community policing members.

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation project supported by USAID and implemented in partnership with Global Communities got off the ground at the end of 2018. As a first step, four Divisional Advisory Panels with the leadership of the relevant Divisional Secretary were set up in Thelippalai (Jaffna), Vavuniya North (Vavuniya), Buttala (Moneragala) and in Seruwila (Trincomalee) with membership of village level government officers, Divisional Secretariat officials and community level women and youth.

The Inter-Faith and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue project supported by the Asia Foundation with funding from the British High Commission led to 80 committee members, including 45 females and 35 males from Trincomalee and Batticaloa receiving training on non-violent communication, early warning and conflict sensitivity, mediation, gender equity, social cohesion and facilitation, work at the district level to mitigate conflicts and addressing 12 such conflict situation in their localities.

In the coming months Sri Lanka will witness multiple nationwide elections for different tiers of government. With competing ethnic nationalisms on the upsurge, the compulsion on the contesting political parties and leaderships will be to obtain bloc votes from the electorate, which will reduce their willingness to champion unpopular causes. One of the lacunae at the present time is the paucity of political champions with regard to promoting the acceptance and practice of universal values, which includes the protection of minority rights and cultures within an overarching framework of pluralism. In this context, the task of instilling a pluralist ethos needs to be taken up by civil society and is the challenge that NPC has taken on in tandem with its network of local and international partners.

Jehan Perera
Executive Director

Projects



Initiating Multi Level Partnership Action for Conflict Transformation

A primary focus of NPC's project Initiating Multi Level Partnership Action for Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) during the year was to ease tension between Sinhala and Muslim communities and prevent an escalation into violence precipitated by the riots against the Muslim community in Digana and Kandy.

District Inter Religious Committees (DIRCs) in several districts took immediate steps to ease the conflict situation by arranging press conferences urging the public not to resort to further violence, visiting victims as well as Muslim religious leaders, engaging with religious leaders of all faiths to ease tension and having dialogues with police and community leaders. Many districts also organized poster campaigns and distributed leaflets calling for ethnic and religious tolerance and harmony.

A main outcome of DIRC activities was a Citizens' Truth Commission conducted in collaboration with university academics to collect information about the conflict. The report was submitted to several government and opposition leaders.

Another focus of IMPACT activities was responding to the Constitutional crisis that occurred in October when President Maithripala Sirisena sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and appointed former president Mahinda Rajapakse as Prime Minister and prorogued Parliament in contravention of the Constitution. NPC staff and about 80 DIRC members from six districts joined a civil society protest outside the Prime Minister's residence to urge a swift end to the crisis.

NPC produced large banners in three languages demanding the immediate reconvening of Parliament, adherence to the Constitution and return to democracy.

DIRCs conducted seminars and awareness raising activities countrywide on the citizen's role to protect democracy, distributed leaflets and participated in a Sathyagraha in Colombo.



Earlier in the year, before the local government elections, Kandy, Kurunegala and Nuwara Eliya DIRCs launched campaigns to canvass for clean elections free of racism, violence and corruption. Voters were urged to select representatives who opposed racism and discrimination while supporting reconciliation and co-existence.

The DIRCs also organized demonstrations displaying banners carrying positive messages and distributed leaflets to raise awareness on how to use the vote to elect clean candidates to local government bodies.

The leaflets urged voters not to elect anyone who promoted religious discrimination or violence to disrupt peace and communities.

Several training workshops on Transitional Justice (TJ) were held under the project for religious leaders to explain the principles of TJ, the importance of Constitutional reform, the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission report and the government’s progress towards reconciliation with mechanisms such as the Office on Missing Persons and the Witness Protection Act.

For many clergy members, this was the first time they had heard about the TJ process and they wanted to participate in future trainings. They were confident to work with NPC, which was recognised as an organization working for reconciliation at the national level, they said.

“We should not forget that many people lost their lives during the past three decades because of the war. It is important to solve problems through talks. No religion tells us to indulge in violence.”
Superintendent of Police Puttalam

racism,
harmony among



A Citizens' Truth Commission was set up by Kandy DIRC to find the root causes of the violence that occurred in Kandy and Digana in March. The commissioners assigned two expert committees to collect evidence from victims and people in areas where the most serious incidents had taken place.

The setting up of a Citizens' Truth Commission is seen as a civil society response to address the failure of the government to find and publicise the truth behind the anti-Muslim riots. It is also evidence of the silent majority who could be won over to the cause of peace building and national reconciliation if there were sufficient moderate political champions as opposed to promoters of ethnic nationalism. The Commission's findings were published in a report that was presented to civil society leaders, government officials, academics and lawyers.

The recommendations of the report included:

- *Conduct programmes to heal psychological wounds of the Muslim community caused by violence*
- *Conduct a cultural exchange programme and an awareness programme on religious principles in coordination with the Central Province Ministry of Education, sending Muslim children to Sinhala schools and vice versa*
- *Introduce laws to punish those responsible for racist criminal acts through the Penal Code*
- *Regulate all media and penalise media institutions that spread false news that encourages racism*
- *Penalise police officers with appropriate disciplinary action when they fail to address racially motivated criminal acts*
- *Make government officials responsible for building and protecting harmony in their own areas of responsibility*
- *Grant the devolution of power under the 13th amendment as a priority measure*
- *Strengthen civil administration in the North and East to enable decision making and implementation through a state mechanism rather than the military*
- *Take school students on visits to places of religious worship other than their own and have a cultural exchange programme through the Education Ministry*
- *Include basic concepts of all religions into school curricula*

An Inter Religious Symposium was held for religious leaders of all faiths, government officials, university academics, students and representatives from youth organizations and civil society organizations in Colombo to acknowledge the successes and failures of the intervention process by DIRCs in addressing ethnic and religious issues in selected districts.

Addressing the symposium former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Chairperson of Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR), stressed the urgent need for a new Constitution, which was necessary to build national unity and peace.

“Minority rights should be ensured by law through the Constitution, either with amendments or with a new Constitution. The government has to do this. It is moving very slowly,” she said. The foundation for development, she said, lies through peace. “NPC is rendering a very important service. Let us all get together and strengthen the process.”

Mano Ganesan, Minister of National Integration, Reconciliation and Official Languages, said the question of language use was one of the main issues in the ethnic conflict. He said his ministry was taking measures to ensure that the provisions on language use in the current Constitution were implemented, including training language officers and using technology for translating.

Representatives from the 16 districts represented gave an overview of the ethnic and religious issues that created conflict in their areas and highlighted instances where DIRCs had intervened to prevent an escalation of tension and violence.

A resolution was presented to government leaders containing issues identified by DIRCs and recommendations for solving them. The six main recommendations were to develop school education reforms and implement them for building reconciliation; reform Sunday School education for developing reconciliation, co-existence and attitudes: take steps to heal the minds of victims affected by the war; develop a national media policy for building national reconciliation; strengthen the national reconciliation programme of the government; and promote social protection and pluralism.



Achievements

- *37 national level religious leaders, 135 district level religious leaders, 27 journalists, 38 youth, 451 university students, 105 novice monks and nuns, trainee and junior priests, and 3,703 members of the public participated in awareness raising events on TJ mechanisms, LLRC, good governance and Constitutional reforms. The average of increase in knowledge of participants was 58%.*
- *The number of DIRC members who were opposed to the TJ process reduced by 19 % when compared to the percentage at the beginning of the project.*
- *Academics, religious leaders, civil society activists, professionals, journalists, youth and women wrote 106 articles for the publication “Perspectives on Reconciliation” and delivered sessions on peace and reconciliation to DIRC members.*
- *DIRC members, including the religious leaders, adapted in responding to the issues of national importance and of the voiceless and came forward as a powerful group to protect human rights and democracy.*
- *Majority of DIRCs were actively involved in counter messaging against extreme opinions or attacks that took place, to reduce or quell tensions.*
- *DIRCs actively participated in protecting and maintaining democracy during the political crisis in October. DIRCs were involved in organizing 28 activities including public seminars, campaigns at the district level and a protest in Colombo.*
- *DIRC members, religious leaders and youth who were trained on TJ, LLRC, good governance and pluralism, engaged in different awareness raising programmes all over the country, developing messaging on inter ethnic and inter religious harmony and the need to build reconciliation to people at grassroots level.*
- *Exchange visits, friendship gatherings and cultural exposures helped people of different communities to understand each other’s cultural identities and cultural values and build relationships among each other.*
- *The DIRCs provided a common platform for sustained interactions in which a space opened for issues pertaining to ethnic and political rights to be discussed from different perspectives, which would otherwise have not taken place. Relationships and contacts were built with government officials and religious leaders so that they came forward to contribute in solving problems among the communities. DIRCs were able to mitigate tension arising from various issues among the communities and to address some issues with their support. Forty-two issues of ethno religious conflicts or tensions were solved or mitigated completely or partially by DIRCs and communities.*

Religions to Reconcile

The Religions to Reconcile project conducted many activities with youth and older people from all religions and ethnicities designed to build bridges across conflict divides.

Religions to Reconcile is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented with a Jordan-based partner organization Generations For Peace (GFP). It focuses on strengthening community networks mentored by religious leaders and engaging them in building consensus for a Transitional Justice (TJ) process and helping communities evolve a pluralistic national identity.

Activities included cleaning up a hospital, holding a cultural sports festival and training in peace building and conflict analysis.

A main focus of the project was organizing exchange visits to build harmony, understanding and co-existence between people of different religions and ethnicities.

Matara DIRC hosted DIRC members and others from Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi during an exchange visit to build empathy and understanding among communities in different districts. The 89 participants included DIRC members, religious leaders, youth, the differently abled, media, local politicians and community leaders.

During its visit, the group participated in an experience sharing forum where war victims from the South, mainly parents of soldiers who lost their lives in the war and bomb blast victims, shared their stories. This was a first time experience for many participants from the North. After the session, where six victims shared their traumatising experiences, members of the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu groups expressed their sadness about what had happened and said that they often identified themselves as the only victims of the war but would not do so now.



The group visited popular destinations in Matara. There was a cultural show, with the different districts showcasing their talents and included dancing sessions, group songs and skits. A dance troupe presented traditional dances from the South.

DIRC members and other participants, including religious leaders from Puttalam and Mannar, travelled to Nuwara Eliya for another inter district exchange visit.

During the discussions, Sister Rubrani Joseph from Mannar DIRC, asked, “What can you do to ensure religious harmony? We should not criticise the other’s religion or culture. We must have the freedom to choose our own religion. We must not say that one religion is superior to the other. Instead, we must learn the other’s religious teachings and values and engage in a self-evaluation, believing in our common humanity and spirituality.”

Sivasri Nandakumar Kurukkal from Nuwara Eliya DIRC, said, “Equality is a necessary precondition for peace and if laws are upheld, there will be peace. The public knows little about the laws and often breaks them because they do not see it as a wrongdoing. There are deficiencies in the law but the media can play a role in information dissemination to a great extent.”

Religions to Reconcile was extended for one year to continue its work with multi religious and multi ethnic communities.

“Many issues divide us but we continue to engage with each other. In the youth group we are trying to re-create the time when we lived peacefully. Peace is not somewhere else, it is where we act together.”

***Dayalan Rajah
Mannar Youth Group***

have say that learn the other’s evaluation, believing in



Respected by young and old alike for his activism, K.S. Lankathilaka has dedicated the past 30 years of his life to foster peace and reconciliation in the Deniyaya area. Lankathilaka experienced the bitter and harsh consequences of war and insurgencies. It was common knowledge that violence was deeply embedded into civilian life of all communities living in Sri Lanka.

As fighting between government soldiers and LTTE cadres was raging in Northern and Eastern districts of the country, Sinhala and Tamil communities began to look at each other with increasing suspicion and mistrust, which would sometimes develop into disputes and skirmishes along ethnic lines. Lankathilaka was disenchanted by the unfair manner in which the Tamils with little or no connection to the LTTE or their ideology became a target in the eyes of other communities to focus their anger, ethno-nationalist biases and reactions to the fighting. Lankathilaka realised it was important not to drive the Tamils in Deniyaya towards extremism by isolating and demonising them so he got involved in efforts to promote and increase inter ethnic integration. His aim was to become a community leader who was committed to reconciling Tamil and Sinhalese people living in the area.

Soon Lankathilaka began to represent Deniyaya communities at workshops, trainings and other activities held in Colombo on peace and conflict resolution. Through his participation in those programmes, Lankathilaka learnt why some Tamils relied on extremist measures to fight for their rights. He also saw the way in which Tamils were harassed because of their ethnic identity and regarded as followers of extremist ideologies.

Lankathilaka realised that as a community leader, he could play an influential role in building bridges between the Sinhala and Tamil communities. When he began work with NPC through the Religions to Reconcile project, he was already a seasoned community activist with a passion for interfaith work.

He took part in a series of conflict resolution trainings provided for community representatives. The project created opportunities for Lankathilaka and others to meet like-minded persons from other communities, exchange views and listen to their needs and aspirations.

In 2018, as appreciation of his commitment to peace building and conflict transformation, Lankathilaka was one of four recipients from Sri Lanka and the NPC Peace Delegates network to attend the 8th GFP Samsung Advanced Training on Conflict Transformation and Peace Building held in Jordan.

Today he is looked upon with respect in his area as an agent of peace. “Different communities in Deniyaya are now able to work together. They meet and carry out activities in collaboration with each other. As a result, we are moving forward, step by step, little by little. A person achieves higher status not because of social status that person is born into, but by accomplishing things. That’s the message of unity, peace and reconciliation.” And that is exactly what Lankathilaka believes in.

Achievements

- *8 DIRCs functioned in project districts and carried out mitigatory interventions to address community level conflagrations.*
- *40 Sub Groups - Youth, Women, Media, People With a Disability and Community Leaders and Local Politicians - in each district carried out community cohesion activities and engaged with the greater community to address inter religious and inter ethnic issues in their localities.*
- *48 peace delegates trained on Conflict Transformations skills engaged with target group members including youth from each district to train them on using sports and arts skills for peace and reconciliation.*
- *1,488 target group members including youth trained on using sports and arts skills for peace and reconciliation activities in their localities.*
- *1 national training on Conflict Transformation using international trainers carried out for 48 Peace Delegates to enhance their knowledge on latest methods.*
- *80 DIRC and Sub Group members, including PWDs consulted on their ideas on pluralism leading to a Pluralism Charter.*
- *284 DIRC members receive training on basic Conflict Transformation skills using practical issues from their localities as part of skills enhancement.*
- *4 Peace Delegates receive advanced training on Conflict Transformation and Peace Building in Jordan.*
- *4 exchange visits to Matara, Galle, Jaffna and Nuwara Eliya to build bilateral inter district relations carried out for 240 DIRC and Sub Group members and Peace Delegates from 8 districts.*
- *40 Community Cohesion activities carried out to enhance community relations with over 1,500 community members participating.*
- *14 mitigatory interventions completed by DIRCs to address community level tension in their localities.*
- *8 information sessions on the 19th Amendment to the Constitution and Constitutional coup carried out for DIRCs and Sub Group and community members.*

Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom

When the religious riots broke out in March in Digana and Kandy, the Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom (CERF) project, through its Local Inter Religious Committees (LIRCs), was ready to initiate reconciliation measures aimed at diffusing tension and preventing an escalation of violence.

These included a series of dialogues bringing together Buddhist and Muslim religious leaders to identify and discuss the root causes of religious tension and to make suggestions for possible solutions.

The idea of the dialogues originated in the action plan that was developed after the clashes between the Sinhalese and Muslim communities in Kandy. Members of the LIRC suggested identifying early warnings of communal conflicts and taking action to prevent them.

The fears and suspicions of Buddhist monks, many related to religious tension, were identified and discussed in detail. Muslim religious leaders also gathered on the same day discuss their concerns and come up with possible solutions.

Another CERF project related activity aimed at promoting reconciliation was training on Non-Violent Communication (NVC) for religious leaders, Grama Niladhari officers, police officers, government officials and civil society leaders. NVC is a tool for personal and individual transformation that would ultimately change a society. The training provided recipients with a conceptual overview of NVC as well as practical skills.



Twenty-five children from a Muslim religious school and their teachers went on an exchange visit to a Buddhist school to learn about Buddhist teachings, and about the rituals and practices carried out in a Buddhist temple. The other objective of the visit was to create awareness among children on pluralism.

The Buddhist children welcomed the Muslim children to the temple. The Chief Monk, Ven. Ahangama Maithreemoorthi Thero, showed them around the temple and explained the rituals that were practiced. The monk spoke about the teachings of the Buddha on peace and reconciliation.

Members of the Beruwala LIRC visited Ampara and shared their experiences with LIRC members of Addalachenai.

The initiative - in which 33 members of the Beruwala LIRC including religious leaders, government officers, police officers and CBO representatives participated - was the first in a series of visits planned for other LIRCs. The activities were designed to be informative and entertaining, where participants visited Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religious places and attended experience sharing sessions and group activities.

The group activities fostered amicable and lasting relationships between members of the two committees, who were given the opportunity to find a partner from the other committee to share experiences and ideas.

Another objective of the programme was to make the two committees aware of each other's work, so that they were able to discuss activity progress, issues faced, challenges encountered, solutions found and knowledge gained from the visit.

Participants visited places of religious worship and held discussions with religious leaders, which shed light on the reasons behind communal violence that had taken place earlier in the year.



Since the end of the war, tension among Sri Lanka's different ethnic and religious communities has been escalating. However peace groups have, through their collective efforts with authorities, been able to curb some of the potential violence.

A Religious Freedom Survey was commissioned by NPC in 25 districts to shed light on the state of religious freedom in Sri Lanka.

The survey was a research study based on opinions about the status of religious freedom gathered from religious leaders, government officials, police and community leaders. Respondents voiced their beliefs on how much religious freedom was enjoyed in their communities.

One major finding of the study was that in areas where there was a good understanding among religious leaders, there was greater religious freedom and tolerance. It was not due to enforcing the law but emerged from the community itself.

The majority of respondents claimed that people "live peacefully helping each other". However about 27 per cent said there was not much interaction between some religious communities. Five per cent stated that there was some tension between religious communities in their areas.

The opinion that people lived peacefully helping each other was less in the Christian community and less prevalent in the Kurunegala, Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts.

According to the respondents, reported incidents of tension were highest in the districts of Mannar, Kandy, Ampara, Kurunegala, Puttalam, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee, Jaffna, Matale and Anuradhapura. However, when compared with actual reported incidents, the number was less than those perceived by the respondents.

Of those who participated, 62.5 per cent felt there was no obstacle to practicing their religion but 27 per cent said they could not always carry out their religious observances freely. Nine per cent said that their religion could be practised freely at certain times and places.

While most Buddhists and Catholics felt there was no hindrance to practicing their religion, Hindus, Muslims and Evangelical Christians did not agree. Among them, 52.9 per cent of Muslims said they could not freely practice their religion.

The most prevalent concern for all religions was the matter of religious conversions while other respondents said rituals of other religions caused disturbances and also that certain practices of other religions violated their own culture.

Achievements

- *75 representatives of community based organizations and civil society organizations are members of LIRC platforms across eight districts.*
- *13 community level inter religious issues were addressed by the committees proving their effectiveness in initiating fruitful community level interventions.*
- *LIRCs trained 320 individuals and LIRC members on pluralism through 8 two-day sessions. 233 individuals and LIRC members were trained on Conflict Transformation through 7 training sessions.*
- *281 individuals and LIRC members were trained in Non-Violent Communication through 8 training sessions.*
- *139 individuals and LIRC members were trained in mediation through 4 training sessions.*
- *95 LIRC members were trained in rule of law through 2 training sessions.*
- *LIRCs, with the support of the CERF project, initiated 25 follow-up activities in their respective localities in the form of discussions, mediations, community engagement interventions and advocacy sessions targeting the public.*
- *10 meetings with religious leaders conducted by LIRCs as discussions for obtaining their inputs in designing committee interventions to address prevailing inter religious tensions in their respective localities.*
- *1 exchange visit conducted between Beruwala and Addalachenai LIRCs with the participation 33 members from Beruwala LIRC. The initiative enabled the participants to share their learning, experiences, challenges encountered, progress achieved in conducting committee events and forecasting future activities.*

Inter-Faith and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue

The project, Promoting Inter-faith and Inter-ethnic Dialogue in Sri Lanka, funded by the British High Commission, is working to diffuse tension in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts where Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims live in close proximity and there could be a high risk of communal conflicts.

One activity under the project was a youth symposium aimed at creating a youth-led platform to enable partnerships between the youth and private sector, civil society organizations and academia to achieve sustainable peace in post war areas.

Another activity was a joint meeting to give an opportunity for the two DIRCs to exchange experiences and learn from each other.

The meeting included a film screening, a panel discussion, a lecture and leadership training. The film generated animated discussion about the peace process in the country. A Moulavi said that the feeling of humanity and sympathy from a character in the film was the same feeling people had in their hearts towards other communities. He got the message that personal trauma caused by the war could be healed in time, so people should not be stuck in the past but should keep moving forward.

DIRC members emerged more united as a result of the meeting. They focused on the problems and challenges they currently faced, which enabled them to recognise their vision and future actions.

At another meeting, members of the District Inter Religious Committees (DIRCs) in Batticaloa and Trincomalee discussed several issues that were contributing to religious and ethnic tension in their districts, and planned activities to alleviate the tension.



In Trincomalee, four issues were identified for immediate action. These were business competition between different ethnic groups, religious leaders dividing the communities by preaching fundamentalism for political purposes, inability to pay back loans from finance companies and high drug and alcohol use resulting in domestic violence, poverty and robbery.

The new issues identified were clashing prayer times during Ramadan, Muslim girls wearing the covered dress in schools, building religious statues in public places, the lack of Tamil speaking policemen and neglected children of women working overseas.

The DIRC agreed to discuss the problems and come up with suitable solutions including improving skills, sharing knowledge and cooperation among DIRC members, workshops and awareness programmes on religion and culture and networking with other DIRCs.

In Batticaloa, the issues causing concern included the ignorance of youth about other cultures and religions, a dispute over a cemetery and unfair allocation of state land. Some solutions included awareness campaigns on religion and culture, celebrating festivals together and meeting relevant government officials to settle the matter of the allocation of state land.

Outdoor activities were held for participants as a bonding and team building exercise because DIRC members felt that these activities were necessary to build trust and acceptance of each other, which would lead to better ways of dealing with conflict and finding inner peace.

Trust building exercises at the two outdoor events helped participants to get to know one other and lower inhibitions, especially as they came from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Several issues were identified for establishing early warning and early response mechanisms. The main issues identified in the Batticaloa district were that students were not attending Sunday School because they had tuition classes, posters against the Hindu religion, unfair state land allocation and racist statements by local politicians.

In the Trincomalee district, drug abuse was identified as a major problem as well as repaying micro finance loans, child abuse and the selection of the trustees to kovils and mosques.

DIRCs in Batticaloa and Trincomalee decided to work with the business communities to promote inter faith dialogue on peace and reconciliation because the business communities had capacity to link different faith and ethnic groups in the market.

The DIRCs organized networking meetings for DIRC members, business people and government officials. The fishing, farming and trading communities were represented.

During the meetings, the business people were able to meet others of different religions and ethnicities who were involved in the same livelihoods. They also met DIRC members and government officials to discuss the way forward on peace and reconciliation.

***“All communities used to live peacefully in the Batticaloa district and shared their limited resources to develop education, health and infrastructure. However, now politicians have created divisions among the communities for their own benefit to gain votes during election time.”
Batticaloa DIRC member***

Two towns, one Tamil and one Muslim, exist side by side in the Kinniya area of the Trincomalee district. Young people from the Tamil town come to the Muslim town for tuition classes. The Trincomalee DIRC learnt that Muslim boys were insulting and harassing Tamil girls attending the classes.

This created an unpleasant situation that could easily have escalated into violence. In order to prevent any incidents, Trincomalee DIRC arranged a discussion with senior police officials, religious leaders, teachers and students.

The President of Jamiyathul Ullma in Kinniya said he had not been informed any problems in the town while the Officer in Charge of the Kinniya police station acknowledged that several incidents had been reported informally to him but that he could not take action because they were not official complaints lodged by victims. However he appreciated and supported DIRC's efforts in organizing the meeting with the relevant parties.

The Tamil and Muslim students and teachers explained the issues and said that many girls, both Muslim and Tamil, were not attending classes because of the harassment.

The President of Jamiyathul Ullma Kinniya promised to talk about the problem at Friday prayers and to publicize the matters to all mosques in the area.

Achievements

- *1 scoping exercise on ethno religious conflict resolution and violence mitigation mechanisms carried out in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts*
- *4 training programmes carried out for 80 DIRC members from Trincomalee and Batticaloa on Non-Violent Communication, early warning and conflict sensitivity, mediation, gender equity, social cohesion and facilitation.*
- *80 committee members, including 45 females and 35 males from Trincomalee and Batticaloa, who received training on Non-Violent Communication, early warning and conflict sensitivity, mediation, gender equity, social cohesion and facilitation, work at the district level to mitigate conflicts.*
- *12 field activities carried out by DIRC members to mitigate and/or address local inter religious and inter ethnic disputes.*
- *1 joint meeting held in Trincomalee and Batticaloa with government affiliated District Reconciliation Committees to discuss possible linkages with DIRCs.*
- *4 learning and sharing events held to share project success stories and the model approach for engaging ethno religious groups in constructive dialogue.*
- *4 meetings with local government officials to discuss local level ethno religious disputes to share knowledge and build linkages with state structures.*
- *4 meetings carried out with Community Police Committee members held in Trincomalee and Batticaloa as part of building linkages with state structures.*

Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for Long Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka

Since young people are a key component in Sri Lanka's quest to build a stable society with a just and lasting peace, NPC embarked on a new project, Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for Long Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka. The project is funded by United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and implemented with the support of Legal Action World Wide and Harvard Law School.

This is NPC's first Transitional Justice (TJ) project with young people. War victims, youth parliamentarians, members of youth clubs and students at vocational training centres will be given priority to ensure the best results from the project.

Through this project NPC engages with young men and women through a three-fold strategy in which law students are being trained and mentored to use TJ mechanisms as an effective and non violent way to address past abuses; university students are being empowered and capacity built to become engaged in positive dialogue, including with policy makers on TJ and reconciliation activities; and young grassroots activists are being supported to understand and address key youth concerns and transmit them to policy makers.

Orientation meetings were held in 21 districts where partners were told of project objectives, how to select people for training and how to handle logistics. As a first step, a perception survey was conducted among young people on TJ in Sri Lanka.

A series of training workshops on TJ was held for university students and youth under the project where they learnt about International Humanitarian Law (IHL) including Right to Protect, the Geneva Convention, the International Criminal Court and United Nations protocols as well as the terms and the concepts of TJ such as impunity, amnesty, criminal responsibility, command responsibility and diplomatic immunity.



Activities included role playing, making posters, writing and story telling designed to bring out their thoughts on war, victims and truth and to empathize with the difficulties of others such as relatives of the disappeared and ex-combatants.

When asked why they were participating in the training, the young people felt that knowledge of TJ was important to improve understanding among all ethnicities and bring about reconciliation. They said that although the war was finished, there was no peace so they wanted to know how to build a united country.

The participants felt that TJ was important because during the war, human rights had been violated, so justice should be done for the victims. Truth seeking was needed to know what had happened to missing persons, they said.

Students from the University of The Visual and Performing Arts were trained on TJ under the project.

In addition to introducing them to the concepts of TJ, the training made the students aware of the importance of TJ in building sustainable peace and motivated them to produce art-based educational tools to take the concept to the public.

The students said they had attended the workshop to learn about peace and reconciliation, improve their leadership skills and find information for film scripts. They were asked to discuss such statements as “LTTE fought for Tamil people’s rights”, “We need a new Constitution”, “We need international support to investigate war crimes”, and “TJ means punishing the war heroes.”

The students were divided into groups to present their ideas on TJ through drawings and drama. They said that as visual arts students, they could promote the concepts of TJ through films, street drama, concerts, art exhibitions, songs, poems and therapeutic music programmes for victims, as well as helping victims to make memorial statues.

A similar programme was held for students from Wayamba University and Peradeniya University, which included team building activities, lectures, film screenings and participatory discussions.



Twenty six year-old Banuka Lanka Edirisinghe and his team of 25 youth leaders from the Kurunegala district formed a youth network called Heart Beat, linking all youth activists who took part in TJ focused trainings conducted by youth leaders. Youth members of the Heart Beat network have carried out a series of initiatives to raise people's awareness on TJ.

"The idea to form a youth network originated during our own training programme conducted by NPC. My knowledge of TJ before that training was zero," said Banuka.

"Our group members suggested sharing information on TJ among youth through a Facebook page and messaging each other via WhatsApp. But we needed to use creative means to attract youth and keep their interest in our activities. So that's how we decided to form Heart Beat," he explained.

Banuka and other youth leaders organize hikes and sight-seeing trips to draw young people to join their Heart Beat network. And during each trip, they allocate time and space to hold discussions with the participants to enhance their understanding about TJ and inspire them to mobilise other youth to work for peace and reconciliation.

"Our network consists of youth from all three communities. We work as a team. Our network has grown to 100 members within few months. Lack of awareness about TJ is a big challenge we face in getting youth involved in our activities. That's why we use fun and adventure activities to keep youth interested in our work," stated Banuka.

The Heart Beat youth network organizes social welfare activities such as distribution of school materials to resource poor schools and represent their network in other peace building and social welfare events taking place in the district. Banuka says each event and meeting creates a new opportunity for them to share information about TJ and their youth network.

"We have made improvements at community level by raising people's awareness on TJ. Youth want to join our network. Since we have youth leaders who are trilingual, our outreach activities attract youth from all three communities into our network," said Banuka.

The Heart Beat youth network also interfaces with the NPC supported Kurunegala DIRC in conducting dialogues with different ethnic and religious groups. With assistance from DIRC's religious leaders, the network held discussions with Sinhala and Muslim community representatives in an effort to prevent further attacks on Muslims after a smoke bomb was thrown into mosque during the anti-Muslim attacks in Digana. Banuka believes their discussions with local community members also helped to prevent further attacks against Muslims.

"We are planning to go to Jaffna on a cultural exchange visit. We also want to understand TJ related issues faced by people living in Jaffna. We will bring that information and make our policy makers and politicians aware of those issues," added Banuka.

Achievements

- *With official University Grants Commission's approval, NPC managed to access all 12 state universities.*
- *The project provided a range of training and mentoring opportunities to over 500 students from 11 universities and another 400 grassroots level youth activists and leaders in 21 districts, building their capacity and confidence to engage in dialogue processes and to connect and consult with their peers and also with policy makers and be internal mediators.*
- *Overall, 1,536 youth, including 802 females and 254 war victims, from across the country were trained to apply their enhanced knowledge and improved capacities to address critical human rights violations and other past abuses, using non-violent and effective mechanisms and platforms.*
- *After taking part in project supported knowledge and capacity enhancement workshops, the students conceptualised and conducted follow up activities in 19 districts, broadening the discourse on TJ and reconciliation among their peers. A drama developed by the student group of the Eastern University was staged during a freshers' induction programme involving over 700 students who came from across Sri Lanka. Another major follow up activity was the Jaffna University's debate competition, "Do We See the Possibility of Transitional Justice in Sri Lanka to Generate Unity among Ethnicities?" which was attended by over 2,000 students who took part in the university's art week programme. Production of a short film by the South Eastern University, an opinion survey video made by University of Kelaniya students, and organization of a Transitional Justice Day by the University of Ruhuna and a one day TJ campaign by the Sabaragamuwa University were also among the follow up activities carried out by university students.*
- *18 trainings representatives from Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanism (SCRM) participated and engaged in a two-way dialogue process.*
- *NPC, with the support of LAW, facilitated a mentoring relationship between the Jaffna Law Department and Harvard International Human Rights Clinic.*
- *A week long study tour was conducted for 3 universities (Jaffna, Colombo and Eastern University) to Harvard IHRC where law faculty staff learned how to establish and run a human rights clinic.*

Accountability Through Community Engagement and Initiatives for Transition

NPC launched a project to set up and maintain Human Rights First Aid Centers (HRFACs) where victims of human rights abuses can seek support and redress. The project, Accountability Through Community Engagement and Initiatives for Transition (ACE-IT), is supported by the European Union under its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights Country Based Support Scheme (CBSS).

An HRFAC is a centre that aims to give victims and survivors of human rights abuses advice and guidance on the how to proceed and seek redress for their grievances.

The ACE-IT project has three objectives: to mobilise civil society to utilise available mechanisms, new and existing, to hold the state accountable and vindicate the victim rights; to have orient targeted state institutions and actors in ethos for change; and to advocate for continued state action on accountability.

The project is a 30-month intervention being implemented in the districts of Nuwara Eliya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Jaffna, Mannar, Gampaha, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Badulla and Moneragala. It is carried out in partnership with the Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L), an NGO working to protect and promote human rights in Sri Lanka.

The project also involves working with Women's and Children's Desks at police stations to sensitise them towards victims, educating government sector officers including law enforcement officers on available mechanisms to support human rights awareness and providing legal support for victims seeking right to information.



Thirty two participants attended a two day training programme for volunteers at the HRFAC in Gampaha. The participants learnt about human rights, fundamental rights, the Constitution, independent commissions, Transitional Justice (TJ), the Right to Information Act and Office on Missing Persons. They were taught how to prepare an affidavit and a written complaint. Practical sessions demonstrated how to deal with the varied cases coming to the HRFAC.

Participants said the sessions were interesting and informative and had helped to clear up many misconceptions they had about components of TJ such as justice and reparations.

Eleven HRFACs are open and receive many human rights violation cases. There are training programmes to support victims and survivors as well as training programmes on leadership and good governance for marginalised groups, meetings for community leaders, small group meetings with key policy makers at regional and national levels and training on trauma counselling for women police constables at women desks in police stations.

A six day training session on befriending for HRFAC volunteers, conducted in English, Sinhala and Tamil, was held in Colombo to help the volunteers to become befrienders in their districts. The programme was designed to improve the knowledge of the advisory services available to people faced with human rights issues.



The principal of the Tamil Girls' Maha Vidyalaya Badulla, Mrs R. Bhavani, was made to kneel and apologise to the Chief Minister of the Uva Province at his official residence because of her refusal to admit a student to the school outside of established government procedure. A 28-year veteran in the education field, she was verbally abused and humiliated in front of the Provincial Education Secretary and the Zonal Director of Education.

Fearing for her life, the principal sought help from the Badulla HRFAC where she recorded her first statement and gave her consent for the HRFAC to act on her behalf. An affidavit was prepared by the Centre and her complaint was forwarded to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka.

As a result, the Chief Minister was taken into custody for threatening the principal and the case filed by the police. Subsequently, Mrs Bhavani filed a Fundamental Rights application citing that her rights had been violated by the Chief Minister and provincial educational authorities. The Badulla HRFAC is continuing to support her along with the Ceylon Teacher's Union (CTU).

She said, "I was able to go all the way to the Supreme Court to seek redress for what happened to me with the support I received from the Badulla HRFAC and the Ceylon Teacher's Union (CTU). They came to my assistance when I was desperate and scared. I hope they will continue to support me in my struggle for a fair outcome."

Achievements

- *5 new HRFACs set up in Jaffna, Mannar, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Nuwara Eliya to support and address rights violations in the districts.*
- *11 HRFAC desks operate in 11 districts supporting victims of human rights abuses seeking redress for their grievances.*
- *314 volunteers attached to 11 HRFACs provide victims and communities with advisory and counselling support to address rights abuses.*
- *45 volunteers at HRFACs trained as befrienders to provide basic counselling support for victims seeking support through HRFACs.*
- *11 publicity campaigns carried out in the districts to share information on available state mechanisms and work of HRFACs.*
- *206 complaints on rights violations received at HRFACs forwarded to the Human Rights Commission for action.*
- *79 complaints received at HRFACs forwarded to the National Police Commission for action.*
- *14 cases filed under the Right to Information Act (RTI) to seek information on rights violations and 38 RTI cases filed to seek information on civil matters through the HRFACs.*
- *1 public campaign held in Jaffna to highlight the importance of rights protection to commemorate International Human Rights Day.*

Technical Assistance to Justice Institutions in Sri Lanka

In collaboration with Legal Action Worldwide (LAW), NPC is implementing a project called Technical Assistance to Justice Institutions in Sri Lanka.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to an effective Transitional Justice (TJ) process through technical assistance and capacity building to key institutions and actors using a beneficiary led approach.

Leveraging NPC's existing public awareness activities and in collaboration with regional Bar Association of Sri Lanka branches, NPC is providing Training of Trainers for key community leaders to learn about strategies for facilitating acceptance of TJ including how to raise awareness of the multiple facets of TJ and to promote understanding of the need for TJ for Sri Lanka to move forward towards prosperity, security and long lasting peace.

A workshop for community leaders on Training of Trainers on TJ was held in Colombo to enhance understanding and support for the TJ concept among community level leaders who disseminated understanding on TJ through community based information sessions in coordination with civil society and government partners.

Participants asked about a special judicial mechanism for trying war related crimes and the importance of investigating human rights violations. They discussed the government's commitment to implement TJ mechanisms with the support of civil society and the international community. Participants concluded that creating opportunities for grassroots leadership was important to disseminate understanding on TJ.



After 20 year-old P.G. Dayarathne, who lives in the Moneragala district, completed his A'levels, he was looking for a job and found employment with the project. He was given training on TJ and attended Training of Trainers workshops. He became convinced that TJ was the best way to pave the way for long lasting peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka while also identifying the root causes of the ethnic conflict. He learnt many important concepts, training methodology and facilitation skills at the workshops.

He qualified to conduct training on TJ for community leaders, community-based organizations and religious leaders as well as youth societies and became a specialist at delivering effective training using methods and techniques he had learnt at the workshops.

Dayarathne had the opportunity to interview for a job with Sarvodaya, which wanted to implement a new project to raise awareness on the need for peace and justice. He was not confident of being successful because the other candidates had degrees while he had only passed his A'levels. However, he had shared the knowledge and experience he gained at the workshops with the interviewers, who were impressed by his expertise. He was selected as a district coordinator and is handling peace building projects at Sarvodaya.

"I would like to thank NPC and its donors for sponsoring the project, which gave me an opportunity to attend the workshops that provided training materials and resource persons. I will continue my TJ work towards establishing a long lasting peace in Sri Lanka," Dayarathne said.

Achievements

- *Conducted two Training of Trainers programmes for 35 Master Trainers on TJ.*
- *Master Trainers conducted 10 awareness programmes on TJ for 698 community leaders including government officers, youth leaders and community policing members.*
- *Conducted an awareness programme on TJ for 24 women religious leaders and community leaders.*
- *Conducted a survey of 120 individuals from 10 districts consisting of civil society members, police, military, youth and women on participatory approaches to develop grassroots community views on TJ.*

Social Cohesion and Reconciliation

NPC launched a project in collaboration with Global Communities and two other strategic partners, the Association of War Affected Women and Shanthiham Association for Health and Counselling, to set up local reconciliation platforms at community level, civil society and government and empowering them to be part of the reconciliation process in the country.

The project is funded by USAID under its Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Activity. Its aim is to work towards a sustainable and inclusive peace by building a pluralistic society that embraces Sri Lanka's religious and ethnic diversity.

It recognises that sustainable peace is best achieved by combining institutional and personal approaches and by changing attitudes through interaction among different identity groups.

The 32-month project aims to strengthen Sri Lanka's efforts to advance social cohesion and reconciliation. It works on three sub purposes - promote a cohesive Sri Lankan identity, reduce socio-economic disparities and enhance community resilience.

NPC is working to promote a cohesive Sri Lankan identity and aims to accomplish three results: to engage communities constructively in reconciliation processes; strengthen citizen driven initiatives and networks to promote social cohesion and reconciliation across divided communities; and improve local and national government institutions processes promoting social cohesion and reconciliation.

NPC's activities began in the Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Jaffna and Moneragala districts by training and mentoring community members, civil society organizations and local authorities to engage in dialogue with different communities and to identify and address potential issues that may cause conflict.



As the first activity of the project, NPC conducted information sessions for the Divisional Advisory Panel (DAP) formed in each district.

DAP is an ad-hoc body established for the better implementation of the project and consists of 20 members with the leadership of the Divisional Secretary. DAP is expected to give guidance for the divisional and community level activities implemented under the project.

The first information session was conducted for the Vavuniya North DAP and the second information session was conducted for the Jaffna DAP. At both the sessions, the members of the panel showed their interest in conducting various activities that would strengthen social cohesion and reconciliation within communities.

The third information session was held for the Seruwila DAP and the final session was conducted for the Buttala DAP.

Many participants said the project was a timely one and they pledged their support to implement programmes in their divisions.

They noted that cultural exchange programmes would give an opportunity for people to understand the values and cultures of other communities, which would reduce misunderstanding and mistrust among different ethnic and religious groups and help to build a cohesive Sri Lankan identity.

“My hometown is Matara but I have been living in Seruwila for 30 years. We were here during the war. I believe that we should create a country in which everyone can live in peace and harmony. Our future generations should not go through our experiences.”

***E.P. Jayasena
Grama Niladari
Trincomalee***

their

Achievements

- *4 Divisional Advisory Panels with leadership of relevant Divisional Secretaries formed in Thelippalai (Jaffna), Vavuniya North (Vavuniya), Buttala (Moneragala) and in Seruwila (Trincomalee) with membership of village level government officers, Divisional Secretariat officials and community level women and youth.*
- *4 information sessions/orientations carried out for Divisional Advisory Panel members on the political situation in Sri Lanka, roles and responsibilities of DAPs and their composition, future activities and sustainability of actions.*
- *1 consultative meeting held with partner Global Communities and training consultant PALTRA to discuss methodology for scheduled Community Facilitators' Training on Community based Social Cohesion and Reconciliation.*

Media and Advocacy

During the year, NPC disseminated political commentaries, newsletters and press releases that were published in the mass media in three languages. The material was uploaded onto NPC's website. Its Executive Director, Dr. Jehan Perera, contributed a regular column to a national newspaper, which came out of NPC's work and the public discourse at its activities.

Excerpts from selected media releases (all media releases can be accessed on NPC's website www.peace-srilanka.org):

Nurture Bipartisanship to Resolve National Issues

Sri Lanka currently has a government of national unity comprising the two largest political parties, the UNP and SLFP, which have hitherto been rivals for political power. As can be expected the forthcoming local government elections have aggravated the tensions between them. It is customary that those who seek to win an election engage in boosting their own images and running down their rivals.

20.01.2018

Primary Responsibility For Post War Reconciliation Lies Within Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's commitment to human rights is being debated in Geneva at the 37th session of the Human Rights Council, which meets in Geneva from 26 February to 23 March 2018. There is a considerable amount of international dissatisfaction with the slow pace of progress due to the long delay in setting up the reconciliation mechanisms, such as the Office of Missing Persons, Office of Reparations, Truth Commission and Special Judicial Mechanism.

20.02.2018

Sri Lanka Must Not Go Through Another Cycle of Violence

Sri Lanka is still in a post-war phase in which the wounds and traumas of the past three decades of violence and war have still not been healed. The violence directed against Muslim-owned shops, mosques and vehicles in Ampara is a continuation of a process of fueling tension, suspicion and hatred between communities.

03.03.2018

Need to Defend the Space for Reconciliation

The political space opened up by the government over the past three years has enabled political parties and civil society to engage in public activities without restriction. The National Peace Council is concerned that this political space is being utilised most fully by ethnic nationalists.

26.05.2018

Prioritise Just Governance And Solve National Question

The restoration of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to his position as Prime Minister by President Maithripala Sirisena has brought to an end seven weeks of political crisis in which the country did not have a functioning government. As articulated by the Prime Minister himself, most of the people of this country joined together to protect the constitution, democracy, and the rights of the people.

18.12.18

Financial Report



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APAG/PR

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA (GUARANTEE) LIMITED Report on the audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying Financial Statements of National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited ("the Organization") which comprise the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2018, and Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Reserves and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes set out on pages 06 to 20 .

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited as at 31 December 2018, and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Sri Lanka Statement of Recommended Practice for Not-for-Profit Organizations (Including Non-Governmental Organization) (SL SoRP-NPO's [including NGO's]) issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards (SLAuSs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the Code of Ethics issued by CA Sri Lanka (Code of Ethics) and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code of Ethics. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Board and those charged with governance for the financial statements

Board of Directors ("the Board") is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with Sri Lanka Statement of Recommended Practice for Not-for-Profit Organizations (Including Non-Governmental Organization) (SL SoRP-NPO's [including NGO's]) issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, and for such internal control as Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, Board is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless Board either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

(Contd.....)

Partners: W R H Fernando FCA FCMA R N de Saram ACA FCMA Ms. N A De Silva FCA Ms. Y A De Silva FCA W R H De Silva ACA ACMA W K B S P Fernando FCA FCMA
Ms. K R M Fernando FCA ACMA Ms. L K H L Fonseka FCA A P A Gunasekera FCA FCMA A Herath FCA D K Hulangamuwa FCA FCMA LLB (Lond) H M A Jayasinghe FCA FCMA
Ms. A A Ludowyke FCA FCMA Ms. G G S Manatunga FCA Ms. P V K N Sajjewanani FCA N M Sulaiman ACA ACMA B E Wijesuriya FCA FCMA
Principals: G B Goudian ACA A A J R Perera ACA ACMA T P M Ruberu FCMA FCCA

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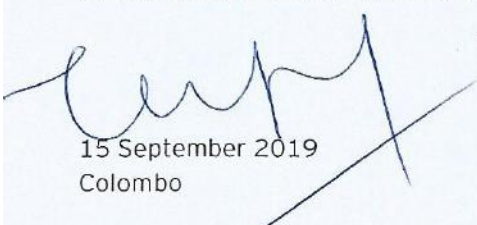
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with SLAuSs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with SLAuSs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



15 September 2019
Colombo


National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

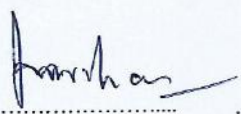
As at 31 December 2018

ASSETS	Note	2018 Rs.	2017 Rs.
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	4	64,312,163	66,105,508
		<u>64,312,163</u>	<u>66,105,508</u>
Current Assets			
Inventories	5	15,889	39,753
Receivables	6	4,376,831	2,240,284
Cash and Bank Balances	7	67,784,090	52,332,631
		<u>72,176,810</u>	<u>54,612,668</u>
Total Assets		<u><u>136,488,973</u></u>	<u><u>120,718,176</u></u>
FUNDING & LIABILITIES			
Accumulated Funds			
Restricted Funds	11	42,269,467	35,402,848
Unrestricted Funds	8	9,299,839	16,390,756
Reserve A	9	4,971,962	73,223
Reserve B	10	10,635,215	9,904,783
Revaluation Reserves		41,478,396	42,942,819
		<u>108,654,879</u>	<u>104,714,429</u>
Non-Current Liabilities			
Staff Welfare Fund	12	725,852	725,852
Retirement Benefit Liability	13	4,875,050	3,839,550
Non-Current Portion of Interest bearing loans and borrowings	14	1,367,077	-
Deferred Liability	15	903,123	303,562
		<u>7,871,102</u>	<u>4,868,964</u>
Current Liabilities			
Income Tax Payable		3,889,162	1,627,029
Payables	16	12,889,779	8,301,542
Current Portion of Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings	14	965,004	860,707
Bank Overdraft	7	2,219,047	345,505
		<u>19,962,992</u>	<u>11,134,783</u>
Total Funding and Liabilities		<u><u>136,488,973</u></u>	<u><u>120,718,176</u></u>

These Financial Statements are in compliance with the requirements the of Companies Act No.7 of 2007.


Finance Manager

The Board of Directors is responsible for these Financial Statements. Signed for and on behalf of the Organization by:


Director


Director

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 21 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Year ended 31 December 2018

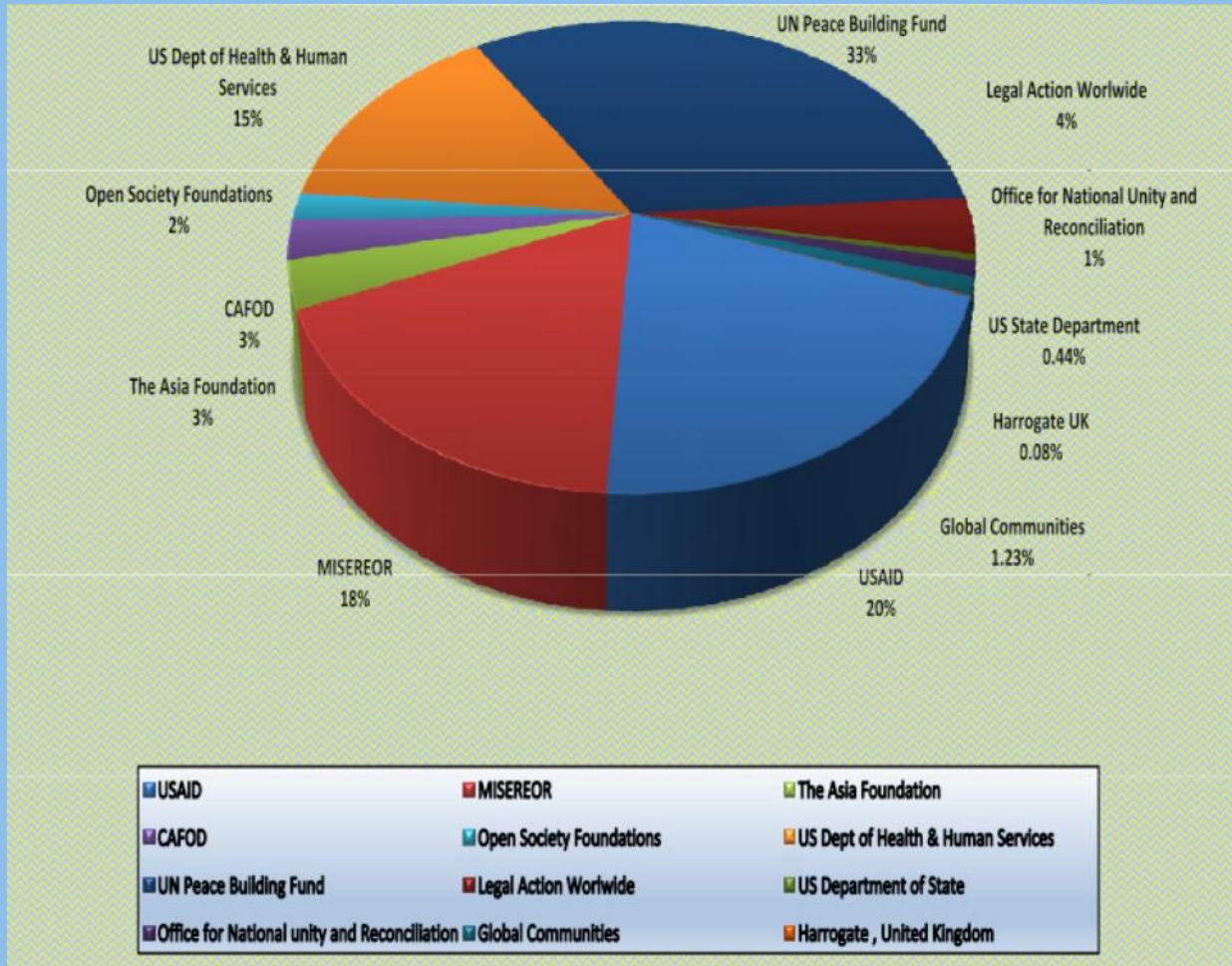
	Note	2018 Rs.	2017 Rs.
Incoming Resources	17	222,032,244	106,053,576
OPERATING EXPENDITURE			
Project Expenses	18.1	(221,032,244)	(105,253,576)
Administrative Expenses	18.1	(5,157,572)	(1,555,860)
Total Operating Expenditure		<u>(226,189,816)</u>	<u>(106,809,436)</u>
Net Deficit on Operating Activities		(4,157,572)	(755,860)
Revenue Earned from Other Activities	19	6,910,830	2,076,808
Finance Cost	20	(436,871)	(208,659)
Net Surplus Before Tax		<u>2,316,387</u>	<u>1,112,289</u>
Income Tax Expenses	21	(2,262,134)	(1,060,110)
Net Surplus After Tax		<u>54,253</u>	<u>52,179</u>
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		<u><u>54,253</u></u>	<u><u>52,179</u></u>

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 21 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



Funding Portfolio

SOURCES OF FUNDING IN 2018



Funds Utilisation

NPC FUNDS USED



- Human Resources
- Program Operations
- Administration /Overheads

NPC Expenditure Growth- LKR



THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 PARTNERS AND DONORS

Major Donors



Peacebuilding
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund



Programme Partners



Future Directions

There are several important issues that the country faces at the present time which peace building organizations would need to take up. These are dealing with the post-Easter Sunday bombing fallout and resulting anti-Muslim sentiment, taking forward the Constitutional reform and inter ethnic reconciliation process and preventing the eruption of violence involving civilians in the run up to the Presidential elections expected to be held at the end of the year. The failure to deal with these issues is jeopardising the country's standing as a humane and civilized one.

Unfortunately, achieving reconciliation and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka has become more complex and problematic due to the unforeseen intervention of Islamic State (IS) and its local members in the country's affairs. Instead of having to deal only with a problematic internal problem, Sri Lanka now has the challenge of dealing with an unfolding problem that is global in scope. Ethnic and religious polarisation is likely to escalate in this context and efforts to engage in political reform that promote ethnic, religious and minority rights will become more difficult to sustain.

There has also been a spike in open racism and ethnic nationalism following the Easter Sunday bombings. Unfortunately, the Easter Sunday bombings and the damaging reaction to it by those who ought to be responsible political leaders, are taking the country once again in the direction of another ethnic conflict. The bombings have been used to create a great rift in Sri Lankan society. Prejudice, hatred and hate speech are at an all-time high. Many politicians and other opinion formers at high levels of the polity have publicly been asserting that the larger Muslim community is complicit in the bombings and discovery of hidden arms that have taken place.

The Sri Lankan crisis is continuing to evolve in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday bombings with push factors that contribute to extremist violence being heightened with the security crackdown on suspected Islamic extremists and by calls amongst the larger non-Muslim population to boycott Muslim businesses. The proximity to national elections that are due at the end of the year contributes to the politicisation of this issue with political parties actively seeking to fan fears and increase ethnic and religious polarisation to capture bloc votes.

It is civil society that looks at issues of preventing violent extremism (PVE) from a long term perspective rather than focus on the short term with political motivations as political parties tend to do. The thrust of government policy would also be to counter violent extremism utilising law enforcement mechanisms even while seeking to garner majority electoral support. This is the dominant feature in Sri Lanka where there is regular political instigation of ethnic and religious polarisation to secure bloc votes.

Despite these formidable obstacles we consider CSOs to be amenable to value based approaches that emphasise the importance of pluralism in practice and the Rule of Law as the basis of democratic society. In the forthcoming year, NPC will be engaging with civil society and religious leaders in countering extremist ideologies. In addition to promoting concepts of inter ethnic power sharing and Transitional Justice, our focus will be on promoting the values of pluralism in which there is equal voice irrespective of number within the sphere of a common citizenship.



National Peace Council of Sri Lanka

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