

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2008

Our Vision

A peaceful prosperous Sri Lanka, in which the freedom, human rights and democratic rights of all the communities are respected

Who we are What we stand for and What we do

The National Peace Council (NPC) was established on 2nd of February of 1995, as an independent, voluntary, social service, non-partisan, national, non-governmental organization working towards the pursuit of and realization of an inclusive, sustainable peace. NPC is the successor organization of the Peace Task Force, which was a consortium of individuals and organizations working collaboratively to promote non-violent elections during the general elections of July 1994.

Over the years, NPC has grown into an active peace organization whose mandate extends to the entire nation and to all districts of the country. The focal point of NPC's programmes is based on the concept of 'a culture of peace' which is defined as "the recognition of the values of peace and non-violence and the human rights and freedom of every person and group recognized in the international Bill of Right and other human rights and humanitarian instruments."

NPC strongly advocates a negotiated political settlement that will enable the organization to achieve its objectives.

Content

| | Pg |
|--|-------|
| 1. Our Vision & Mission | 2-3 |
| 2. Messages | 4-6 |
| 3. 2008 - A Review | 9-10 |
| 4. Our Objectives and Strategies | 11-11 |
| 5. Our Plan for 2008 to 2010 | 12-12 |
| 6. Our Achievements and Activities 2008 | 13-13 |
| ◆ Peace Education is our Priority! | 14-29 |
| ◆ People, Peace & Participation! | 30-41 |
| ◆ Struggling for a negotiated Solution! | 42-43 |
| ◆ Towards a just society through Rights & Reforms! | 44-47 |
| ◆ We believe in Quality Output! | 48-48 |
| ◆ Reaching out via media! | 49-52 |
| ◆ Administration | 53-54 |
| ◆ Financial Review | 55-57 |
| 7. Looking Ahead | 58-58 |
| 8. Revisiting our web site | 59-59 |

Our Mission

To build a strong foundation among targeted groups, towards a non violent attitudinal and behavioral transformation, for a just and sustainable peace In Sri Lanka

Chairman of the Board of Directors



As Chairman of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to be able to present the Annual report for 2008.

I thank every member of the Board of Directors, the Governing Council and the staff of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC) for their unstinted cooperation in undertaking a variety of activities during the year under review under challenging circumstances.

I thank all our donors who trusted us and came forward to support us in sharing our vision.

As I write this in June 2009, the war has ended with a comprehensive defeat of the LTTE in the battlefield. Sri Lanka is swiftly moving to a post conflict scenario and the country needs to deal with enormous challenges facing policy makers, military,

academics and civil society to grapple with the unfolding peacemaking and peace building processes.

In this quest I wish to highlight the vision of NPC:

In order to achieve its overall goal that of the establishment of a long-term, viable solution to the ethnic conflict, NPC is committed to the creation of a culture of peace, which upholds the values of non-violence, respect for human rights and free expression of ideas.

Based on this vision, I commit the National Peace Council to work with the government and all stakeholders towards achieving a just political solution that addresses the roots of the ethnic conflict; to promote national reconciliation built on respect for equal rights of all communities; and safe and dignified early return of internally displaced persons to their areas of residence.

Joe William

Executive Director



The war of the Sri Lankan government against the LTTE moved towards its peak in the year 2008. All the major political forces joined hands to support the war and took partisan sides on either side of the divide. Large scale battlefield losses of life and property took place, along with disappearances, abductions and killings off the battlefield. The very concept of human rights became a contested one and seen as an item of partisan political warfare. The space for those who disagreed with the violence and terror of war was considerably reduced.

It was in adverse circumstances that the National Peace Council kept to its mission of peace education and advocacy, upholding its conviction that war was not the solution to the ethnic conflict, that a negotiated political settlement was the way to peace, and that such a political solution needed to include concepts of power sharing between the majority and minority ethnic communities. At critical junctures, NPC took public stands that accorded with its values, and represented the sentiments of the civil society groups it worked with.

NPC also sought to popularize new themes suitable to the circumstances, but in accordance with its mission. NPC wishes to affirm its commitment to the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Sri Lankan Constitution and to the implementation of the 13th Amendment that established a system of devolution of power, and to the 17th Amendment that has sought to restore institutional integrity into the system of governance. Among the important initiatives that NPC undertook was the promotion of concepts of power sharing and values of pluralism suitable for a multi ethnic, multi religious and multi lingual society.

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Sri Lanka is part of the larger South Asian reality. There are conflicts arising from religious extremism and ethnic, communal, caste and linguistic sub-nationalism. These conflicts can only be contained by building the institutions for a pluralistic society where not only diverse identities between individuals co-exist but where multiple identities can be maintained by each individual.

A series of workshops and conferences was launched in which Sri Lanka's historical evolution was viewed through the lens of pluralist and constitutional perspectives, and identifying the values that have sustained pluralism and powersharing worldwide. Another important programme of work was the conducting of several inter religious conferences with the objective of establishing a district network of inter religious leaders who would be part of a sustainable peace building initiative in the future.

What sustained, and continues to sustain, NPC's commitment to its mission has been the positive response it has received to its peace education message amongst the community leaders it works with. We have seen and felt the desire of these community leaders to be part of a society that is governed by laws that are democratic and fair to all, and in which plural identities are respected and safeguarded. NPC also expresses its appreciation to its donors and partner organisations, both international and national, who stood with us and gave us solidarity in keeping to our mission and to our values.

Jehan Perera

Chief Operations Executive



As a new entrant into the National Peace Council in 2008, and with my longer engagement in development work with National and International Organizations, I see the National Peace Council as a unique organization with a vision for sustainable development.

Most of the development efforts are reversed by the unstable conditions prevailing in the country and the need for a permanent peace surfaces all the time but goes untapped. The National Peace Council's continuous advocacy for a negotiated political solution to the 60 year old conflict does keep NPC abreast in development. The transitional stage from the military victory to a prospective permanent peace is what NPC is endeavouring to struggle for, with like minded actors and groups.

2008 marked the dawn of a new beginning for NPC. The organization driven by dedication towards achieving a negotiated settlement revisited its Vision and Mission statements embracing a human rights perspective into its peace package in order to be pragmatic in achieving 'just peace'.

The 2008-2010 strategic plan was developed guided by the new vision and mission of the organization, and was translated into a practical action plan which is owned by the staff and partners.

As the Chief Operations Executive my effort has been to bring vision and actions together in formulating projects and in identifying objectives, outputs and indicators that make those projects relevant to the pressing needs of the time. I am confident that this annual report will demonstrate

NPC's contribution to peace, justice and reconciliation.

The projects implemented throughout the past year focused on encouraging pluralism and understanding and advocating for power sharing through a series of workshops and conferences that impacted in creating new groups and a broader space for peace initiatives.

The overarching goals of NPC was sustained this year through setting the stage at track 2 and track 3 level for communities to unite under the same umbrella of sharing common thoughts on peace.

More over the peace education to the grassroot level target communities as well as to the leaders of these communities, showed the commitment and motivation of these communities along with their leaders striving to be part of a society governed by democracy.

With the war seeing its end in the North and East, the 'Teams' of NPC are actively engaged in achieving the expected results. Field engagement is the live wire of NPC in promoting pluralistic values that enhance a pro peace environment.

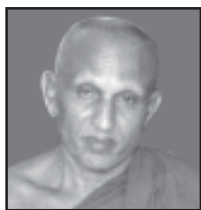
Working for peace in a challenging situation is made possible by the committed and hard working staff and the efforts are well supported by the Management and the Governing Council members who hail from a variety of professional and academic backgrounds.

I am proud to be part of such a team and I appreciate the support rendered by the respected Governing Council Members, the Executive Director, Management Colleagues and staff in making my service possible at NPC.

Regina T Ramalingam

Members of Our Governing Council

Board of Directors



Ven. Buddhiyagama Chandraratne Thero
President, Vanni Cultural Foundation
Puttalam



Joe William
Advisor - Canadian International Development Agency
Hony. Chairman of the Board



Javid Yusuf
Attorney at Law
former Ambassador to The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Dr. Thangamuthu Jayasingam
Senior Lecturer
Eastern University
Environment Advisor - UNDP



Dr. Anita Nesiah
Advisor - Policy and Advocacy
World Vision Lanka



Kingsley Rodrigo
Attorney - at - Law
Hony. General Secretary, Chairman - PAFREL



Tony Senewiratne
Hony. Treasurer
Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity



Dr. H.S. Hasbullah
Hony. Asst. General Secretary
Senior Lecturer - Geography
University of Peradeniya



G.V.D. Thilakasiri
Hony. Asst. Treasurer
Secretary - Free Trade Union
Development Centre



Dr. Jehan Perera
Executive Director
NPC



John Thambar
Former Deputy Director
Social Service Department
Former Addl. Director
Sri Lanka



Sr. Mary Barbara
Provincial Councillor
Apostolic Carmel



Elmo Alles
Naturalist



Ms. Saroja Sivachandran
Director - Center for Women and Development



Prof. M.S. Mookiah
Professor of Geography
Peradeniya University
Former Vice Chancellor Eastern University



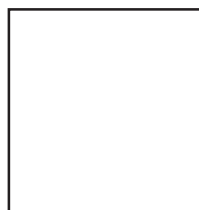
Ms. Visakha Dharmadasa
Chairperson
Ass. of War Affected Women Parents of Servicemen missing in action



R.M.B. Senanayake
Retired Civil Servant,
Director of Combined Services



M.H.M. Niyas
Chairman Media Link,
Steering Committee Member of Muslim Council, Director Lanka Salt Limited



Aiyathurai

NPC Staff Team



From Left to Right Seated : Chrisanthi Wickramarachchi, Marlene Machado, S.P. Nathan, Jehan Perera, Regina T Ramalingam, W.K.Rupika Chandanie, Saman Seneviratne, Thushal Withanage

Standing Middle Row: Rasika Seneviratne, Pushpa Ranjanie, Priyadharshini Silvamuthu, Gajamugan Thillainathan, Ajith Wickremasinghe, Shantha Mahindapala, Upendra Perera, K.S.Ranaweera, Ranjeewa Indika, Badra de Silva, P.Navaneedaran, Jega Mahalingam, Lakshmi wijesekera

Standing Last Row: K.Gopalan, Rukmal Silva, M.A.M.Arham, Rohitha Wickramarachchi, Sarath Karunaratne, Thiyaga Chandana.

Absent: Wasantha Pushpakumara, M.Thiruvashar, Wajira Thennakoon

NPC Staff Management Team



Marlene Machado, Regina T Ramalingam, Jehan Perera, S.P. Nathan, W.K.Rupika Chandanie

2008 - A Review

The year 2008 saw an escalation of the war in the North which took centre-stage in the affairs of the country. Military defeat of the LTTE took first place in the agenda of the Sri Lankan government. The valued concepts of human rights, humanitarian law, and international standards in the provision of relief, became tasks for civil society groups to take up. However, the impunity with which hundreds of people, including senior journalists, were subjected to targeted killings, abductions and disappearances created an environment of intimidation, which few were willing to challenge.

The focus on the war during the Provincial Council elections and the lack of human rights protections for sections of the population was disturbing. There is a serious weakness in the absence of a culture of devolution and human rights, which are essential for a political solution to the conflict. For instance, the elected Chief Minister of the Eastern Province had gone on hunger strike, and had complained, on numerous occasions, that his power to engage in local governance is crippled due to lack of economic resources and decision making power.

Unfortunately, a commitment to protect local and provincial governance, and human rights at the National level is also low. The lack of an effective response to the crisis

of failing law and order can be attributed partly to the gross politicization of the state machinery. Perhaps it is to remedy this alarming situation that the Supreme Court directed the government to appoint the Constitutional Council. The non implementation of the 17th Amendment to the constitution for over three years has vested all the powers of appointment in the hands of the President and therefore subjected it to politicisation.

The role of civil society organizations in this context is to give voice and life to the concepts of a negotiated political settlement, devolution of power and human rights by helping people to realize them in practice. This requires a three step process: awareness creation, mobilization and engagement of citizens with the decision makers in society. Most civil society organizations are strong in creating awareness, , but are weak with regard to the other aspects of the process.

By creating awareness about human rights amongst people, seeking to bring in government authorities into the above process, and facilitating mutual engagement, there is an increased level of problem solving, . Moreover, organisations such as NPC also seek to operate at the macro level through effective advocacy and lobbying programmes on behalf of devolution of power and human rights that draw their inspiration and

legitimacy from work done at the micro and community levels.

As an organisation committed to a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict, the National Peace Council, in accordance with its principles, addressed the deteriorating situation. At a time when dissent was either being forcibly suppressed or people co-opted to the status quo of disorder, the NPC voiced its dissent to war and its consequences, pointing to the need to peacefully and politically resolve the ethnic conflict that had given rise to war and terror. Further the NPC conducted its ongoing community and national level programmes of peace education and power sharing. Despite the situation of the war and an emphasis on a military solution in the general political debate, the NPC was able to demonstrate that it could motivate its constituencies with regard to a political solution based on the concepts of devolution and power sharing.

During the current period under review the NPC was able to conduct a large number of programmes and activities, as well as engage with a diverse constituency. This included the NPC's traditional Track 3 constituency as well as new Track 2 parties. This was a considerable achievement in the context of the deteriorating political situation and militarisation of society.

The NPC was able to put in place a more effective decision making process, with its Board of Directors taking over a greater decision making role and the Governing Council focusing on policy issues. At the level of the NPC secretariat there was a greater emphasis placed on prior planning and on

team work with programme units being replaced by more flexible teams. These changes have resulted in an improvement in NPC's delivery of project outputs and efficiency.

The NPC was also able to hold unwaveringly to its principled position that the resolution of the ethnic conflict requires a political solution in which there is devolution of power to the provinces and power sharing between the ethnic communities. It was also able to generate positive responses despite the majority of macro level political actors taking contrary positions.

In keeping with the demands of the time the NPC came up with a three-year, strategically-designed plan which focused on results and the activities needed to achieve them. The new strategy of the NPC adopts a team oriented approach to implement projects. With its focus on six important areas and its well designed programs, the NPC achieved most of the results it targeted. With more than three books published and the Executive Director receiving the internationally acclaimed Sakai Peace Award, 2008 in short was a very eventful year.

However, in spite of its commitment, the NPC faced obstacles in the form of attacks and threats from certain sectors of society. We are glad to report that we were able to overcome these obstacles and go above and beyond what we had set as goals for the year 2008.

The NPC will forge ahead into 2009 with unwavering determination and commitment. 2009 promises to be a busy and significant year in the work of the NPC.

Our Objectives and Strategies

In 2008 the NPC introduced a three year plan that enables it to take a longer term perspective on its work. The plan prioritises five strategies for organisational development to ensure a meaningful provision of core NPC services to its intended target groups. This is expected to enhance the effectiveness of the organization from 2008 - 2010. These prioritised strategies include the following:

- Diversify tools to reach mass audiences through its Track II partners.
- Reconfirm promising new intermediary (Track II) target groups and develop capacity to reach them with practical, peace building projects in strategic alliance with selected national peace agents.
- Enhance the quality of peace building efforts with community leaders and CBOs,

in particular by establishing working relations that :

- are Long lasting
- are Diverse and interactive
- are Tailor-made
- Target selected influential members from communities
- are Inclusive of interpersonal and conflict sensitivity efforts.

- Improve insight into the extent to which intended short-term results (changed understanding and awareness) and long term impact (changed pro-peace behavior) are achieved
- Enhance visibility and the international profile of the NPC through intensifying working relationship with like minded organizations outside Sri Lanka

NPC's Intermediate Strategy to Achieve Results

As an intermediate strategy for the period under review, the team concept was introduced. Each Team was entrusted with one to two of the expected results which were translated into the Team's Action plan. These plans contributed towards the overall NPC Action Plan of 2008/2010. To enhance performance a "team building workshop" was conducted, while the newly done staff stations made the functioning of the Teams physically viable.

The outcome of these changes is the ownership of the Action Plan by the staff and partners. This move also established vertical and horizontal relationships within and amongst the Teams. The tasks which were specific to each Team are now being shared with all the Teams as an endeavour to compliment and supplement each other's efforts.

Our plan - 2008 to 2010

We translated our Strategic Plan and Guidelines into our Action Plan for 2008-2010 through a process of consultation with the staff, the management, including the members of the Governing Council, and particularly with the field representatives .

Our action plan consists of objectives, purpose, results and activities that we intend to arrive at with appropriate indicators.

Overall Objectives of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka

A Peaceful Prosperous Sri Lanka, in which the freedom, human rights and the democratic rights of all communities are respected.

Purpose:

To build a strong foundation among targeted groups towards a non-violent attitudinal and behavioural transformation, to achieve a just and sustainable Peace in Sri Lanka.

Results:

1. Knowledge and skills of different stakeholders on non-violence and peace increased
2. Civil society's participation in peace-related efforts increased
3. Positive dialogue between aggrieved parties in the conflict was promoted
4. Target groups understanding of peace-oriented constitutional reforms improved
5. Knowledge on human rights and human rights laws were strengthened among the target groups
6. The quality of the NPC programs was ensured
7. Improved capacity of staff and partners to achieve NPC's objectives
8. Enhanced peace messages reached the target audience.

Our Achievements and Activities 2008

*In 2008, our strategy manifested results through the
activities we took to achieve them.*

Peace Education is our Priority!

To bring about attitudinal and behavioural transformation, the NPC focused on empowering the different stakeholders and the staff of NPC through various peace educational programmes aiming at increasing the knowledge and skills of different stakeholders in non-violence and peace (Result 1) and improving the capacity of staff and partners to achieve NPC's objectives (Result 7).

Several Activities were undertaken to achieve the desired results:

Developed peace education materials for target groups

Peace educational modules on “Conflict Resolution and Conflict management, Conflict sensitive reporting, power sharing,” are now readily available for policy makers, planners and for like-minded organizations who are striving to establish peace along with NPC.

Conducted second language classes in 10 districts to promote harmonious living

Over the years, language differences have widened the gap between Sinhalese and Tamils, and have thus been a contributing factor to the present ethnic crisis. NPC, realizing the necessity of reducing this gap and perceiving this to be a long felt need, initiated action to conduct second language classes at the district levels. The strategy was to have a pool of organized teachers act as trainers of the Tamil language and the NPC initiated the

setting up of this pool of teachers.

Before commencing Tamil language classes for identified groups at the district level, a two day “Training of Trainers” programme for teachers was conducted. Applications were collected through the District Action Committees in 15 districts. From these applications, 30 teachers were selected according to their fluency in Tamil. A professional trainer, a Senior Lecturer from the Department of Linguistics, University of Kelaniya, conducted the two-day TOT (Training of Trainers) programme. The trainees were educated on different aspect of language teaching, including how to convey Tamil sounds phonetically.

Developed the understanding of NPC Staff Members on Peace Education

The following programmes were conducted to enhance the knowledge of NPC staff.

1. Training Programme on “Non-Violent Communication”



'The Bridges that Still hold' - Remembering Black July



Active participation of youth in Matara



We are the NPC Team



Building relationship through language learning - A TOT session

In a country where years of conflict have established a deeply rooted ethnic divide, an attitudinal and behavioural change in the lives of the people is crucial. Our peace education programmes encourage a non-violent approach towards peacebuilding and emphasise harmonious cross-cultural connections in the midst of the current conflict.

A half-day training programme, on “Non–Violent Communication”, was held for the NPC staff. The training was one of a series of peace education programmes conducted to build the capacity of staff for training, and is considered to be an essential element of a successful peace education programme.

A professional trainer who is the head of the Centre for Education and Leadership Development and the Deputy Director General of National Institute of Education conducted the training.

The training was organized according to the “learning to understand” process. Thirty-one (31) staff members were engaged in an extensive dialogue on concepts such as perceptions of “self” and “feelings of others” during this training. Staff members have agreed to integrate what they learned from this programme into their daily activities, specifically when performing official work.

2. Peace Educational Training on “Political History and Ethnic Issue of Sri Lanka”

A Peace Education training workshop to improve the knowledge and understanding of political history and the ethnic issues of Sri Lanka was conducted for the staff. Before conducting the training, the management decided that it would be prudent to assess the existing level of knowledge of staff on the above topic so that the training administered would be “need based” and beneficial to all participants.

Consequently, a questionnaire with 50 questions was issued to the staff to ascertain their knowledge on the political history of Sri Lanka and the power-sharing mechanisms that have been introduced by different political parties over time.

The survey included questions concerning events of political significance in Sri Lanka’s past, with a special emphasis on those events contributing to today’s ethnic conflict. Marks were awarded on a scale of 1 to 100; below 40 marks was considered to indicate low knowledge, while above 80 marks was taken to indicate a high level of familiarity.

According to the survey, forty-one percent (41%) of staff members demonstrated a low level of knowledge regarding both the political history and power sharing mechanisms of Sri Lanka. In contrast, only nine percent (9%) demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge on the subject. Meanwhile, the remaining fifty percent (50%) of the staff were somewhat familiar with past political events, though the surveys displayed significant gaps in their range of knowledge. Analysis of the data revealed that a considerable number of staff members have a better understanding of Sri Lanka’s political history after Independence than on power sharing mechanisms.

Developed a Participatory Syllabus and Trained Resource Persons in a Foundation Course in Sri Lankan Studies and Social Harmony

The NPC was commissioned by the University of Jaffna to evaluate and redesign the Foundation course in Social Harmony that they currently conduct for students of the “hard” sciences. In a society that has experienced ethnic isolation, degrees of social debilitation and a history of violence, a course on Social Harmony has great potential to positively direct the attitudes and behaviours of youth towards rebuilding society. Thus, the NPC decided to focus the course on subjects that would intellectually engage students, challenge them to re-examine their beliefs, and lead them towards applying the concepts of peace, conflict resolution and social harmony in their own experiences.

Once a tentative syllabus was formulated, the NPC invited the resource persons of the course to participate in a syllabus development workshop. Not only would these resource persons (whose specialities were also in the hard sciences) benefit by discourses on the relevant subject matters with experts in the field, but their feedback would help the NPC modify the syllabus to suit university specifications and student needs.

The structure of the programme allowed for a broad and comprehensive gathering of knowledge on Sri Lankan Studies and

Social Harmony. Ideas pertaining to Sri Lankan culture, history and politics were all discussed, while the various methods of achieving peace were elucidated. The feedback sessions also taking place during the programme allowed for a process through which received knowledge could be effectively incorporated in the course syllabus.

Development of Syllabus

After five consecutive days of lectures and discussions, the participants of the programme were able to draw up a new, revised syllabus. It is believed that this syllabus will be an effective tool in introducing science students to the subject of Sri Lankan Studies and Social Harmony. It is also hoped that the syllabus will instil in these students the attitudes that are necessary for creating peace and harmony in their own communities.

Crossing the North-South Divide

Also a notable achievement of this programme is the arena it provided for intellectual mingling across Sri Lanka’s North-South divide. The faculty members from University of Jaffna were able to meet with their academic counterparts from the rest of Sri Lanka, creating a singular atmosphere in which otherwise hidden experiences and ideas could be freely shared. In a nation where Tamil intellectuals from the North are usually divided from the rest of Sri Lanka’s academic sphere, such mingling is vital for knowledge to be complete.

It was evident that both the participants and the resource persons were appreciative of this aspect of the programme. The lecturers from the University of Jaffna were anxious to learn as much as they could during their stay, even volunteering extra hours of their own time. Meanwhile, the eagerness of the resource persons was evidenced through their readiness to participate and their offer to travel to the North themselves if necessary.

Knowledge in Sri Lanka is fragmented, construed according to one's ethnicity. The military conflict that divides the country further ensures that an inter-communal discussion of ideas cannot easily take place. This programme saw the leading minds of Sri Lanka come together, regardless of ethnicity, to examine the very ideas that keep them apart. New facts were learned, while others were challenged, creating a very valuable arena for the discovery of truth.

Challenges enroute...

Although the programme achieved a successful outcome, there were some obstacles in the development of an effective syllabus; these were presented to the group. Since some of the topics within the subject of Sri Lankan Studies could be viewed as controversial (and thus not always safe to discuss), it was difficult to present certain histories in ways that would

not generate comment. Since, as stressed repeatedly throughout the programme, the truth is a vital aspect of mutual understanding, it was important to include these histories in a course on Social Harmony. It was finally decided to leave these topics out of the syllabus, while including them indirectly in the course.

Also presenting a challenge to the effective teaching of social harmony was the limited setting in which this course would be taught. While some aspects of social harmony could be practised in the North, the mono-ethnic environment of University of Jaffna makes it difficult to practically apply the values of multiculturalism. The students have no opportunity to see ethnic harmony in action, or try to incorporate it in their own lives. While this is regrettable, it was considered crucial to teach the theory of multiculturalism so that the attitudes that form the foundation of multiculturalism could at least take root.

While the social atmosphere of the course was itself a challenge, the programme also encountered some difficulties that restricted the formation of a comprehensive course. The limited time available to the group meant that not all topics related to Sri Lankan Studies and Social Harmony could be covered; thus some of these topics had to be researched by the participants on their own.

Prabodhini - Building Peace through Partnerships

The Gender Unit of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka, also known as Prabodhini, implemented a project funded by the European Union from the inception of the Unit in 2003 until December 2005. The overall objective of the EU funded Project, entitled '*Increasing the constructive participation of civil society in the Peace Process*', was to increase and promote the constructive participation of women and local peace committees in civil society and the peace process in Sri Lanka.

As a result of this project, the Prabodhini Unit established networks through Partner organization in ten districts: Anuradhapura, Ampara, Batticaloa, Jaffna, Kandy, Kurunegala, Matara, Moneragala, Nuwara Eliya and Vavuniya.

A new strategy which was designed based on the work already conducted under the 2003 - 2005 (above) project commenced in April 2007. The new project, "Building Peace through Partnerships", addresses the need to re-build and strengthen ethnic relationships at grass-roots level, as a means of supporting a top-down approach for peace by policy makers and key implementers. This includes continuous capacity building of both partner organizations, and network members, and also incorporates a new aspect of peace building, using women as agents of change. This project is being implemented in the districts of

Anuradhapura, Batticaloa and Monaragala.

The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the prevention of conflict and the promotion of harmonious ethnic interaction between ethnically different communities through mediation and building partnerships based on inter-ethnic and inter-cultural understanding.

The Specific Objectives of the project were:

- (1) To promote the engagement of civil society in conflict prevention and resolution, and to build partnerships between different ethnic communities through the establishment of 6 Village Steering Committees and 3 Joint Village Steering Committees in the Districts
- (2) To contribute towards the awareness of women & children's rights, and the promotion of harmonious ethnic interaction based on the recognition of diversity and pluralism at community and national level in the Districts
- (3) To uphold the rights of at least 1500 women to participate fully in community decision making processes through rights based education and the establishment of 6 Women's Committees
- (4) To promote inter-cultural and inter-ethnic understanding between villages of different ethnic compositions through Exchange/ Exposure visits, second language education programs and other peace building activities and share good practices nationally through a radio campaign

Effective results were achieved through the following activities

- ◆ Ten (10) women's peace committees were formed and were established as networks.
- ◆ The NPC organized publicity campaigns supporting the activities of the Women's Peace Committees and conveyed their messages via Regional Radio programs conducted at district level by partner organizations replacing the community radio concept (due to logistical issues). These comprised of 508 Radio spots in Sinhala and Tamil over State and private radio, and 63 Radio discussion programs over State radio in Sinhala.
- ◆ Over one hundred (100) workshops and seminars were held on the topics of Gender, Human Rights, Communication, Leadership & Mobilization skills, Women's Participation in Public Life and Politics, Women's Rights in Sri Lanka, Democracy in Sri Lanka, and Non-Violent Communication skills and strategic planning.
- ◆ Ten popular events giving women a platform within their own communities were held.
- ◆ Media Campaign on Women and their increased participation in Politics and Public Life, was organized in all three languages .in the Press and on national television. A total of 279 TV messages were telecast over Sinhala, Tamil and English State and Private media. A total of 27 press advertisements were run in Sinhala, Tamil and English in State and private newspapers.
- ◆ Publicity campaign, via the following means, carried advocacy messages calling for the empowerment of women were printed and distributed: 5700 Sinhala language posters, 4125 Tamil language, 4650 English language posters were printed; 60 Sinhala language banners for Poson Poya in the year of 2004; 180 banners in Sinhala and Tamil; h 4000 stickers and Car stickers
- ◆ Developed training manuals on the following: Women's Political and Economic Literacy, Gender and Conflict Transformation, Leadership, Mobilization and Skills, Women and Peace Building, What women should know about CEDAW and What Women should know about Domestic Violence. These manuals were developed towards the end of the project period and will be printed under NPC's core funding budget lines.
- ◆ 20 workshops on conflict resolution and management were conducted in ten districts .
- ◆ 600 copies of the opinion survey on "Participation of Sri Lankan Women in Politics, the Peace Process and Public Life" were printed in Sinhala, Tamil and English languages. Research was conducted on "The Representation of Women in Politics in Sri Lanka" and "A Rapid Assessment of Women's Notions of Justice after the Tsunami".
- ◆ The following list of articles were published in newspapers
 - "A Discussion of Reforms required to Increase Women's Political Participation and Representation" (Ambika Satkunanatha);
 - "Women's Political Participation and

- Decision Making” (Dr. Tressie Leitan)
- “Resolution 1325: A Promise to Hold on To” (Saama Rajakaruna)
- “Beyond Beijing: Beyond Numbers” (Saama Rajakaruna)
- “Women and Peace Building- Ensuring that it is an Inclusive Process” (Bhavani Fonseka)
- “A New law for Domestic Violence” (Dr Mario Gomez).

The Powers and Limits of Pluralism in South Asia

South Asia is one of the most diverse regions in the world. It has a long history of cross-cultural exchange and coexistence. However, the politicisation of ethnic, linguistic and religious communities in recent times has diffused inter-group harmony, polarized society and amplified exclusive group identification. As a result, separatist movements emerged and began to engage in violent political agitation throughout the region. However, the mere existence of difference is not responsible for these conflicts. Instead, it is the States’ failure to adequately accommodate these differences. The current challenge for pluralistic South Asian States is to embrace diversity in order to curtail these violent trends .

Like India and Pakistan, several smaller states in South Asia are beset with ethnic, social and political problems. Sri Lanka is one such microcosm of regional diversity and conflict. Since the country gained independence in 1948, successive Sri Lankan governments have failed to implement effective political and constitutional measures to

accommodate group differences. This failure has resulted in a protracted civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a separatist group fighting for an independent state for Sri Lankan Tamils. The conflict has consumed the country for the past 25 years, undermining national morale, retarding social and economic development, causing widespread destruction and resulting in an estimated 70,000 deaths.

The Sri Lankan Civil War is often perceived to be the result of competing claims to self determination and territorial integrity. However, it is also useful to examine the manner in which Sri Lanka’s inability to accommodate its pluralistic population has fuelled the conflict. With this in mind, the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka worked with the Foreign Affairs & International Trade, Canada, to explore and collect ideas on ‘Pluralism in South Asia’. As part of this effort the NPC organized a ‘Regional Conference’ on ‘Pluralism in South Asia’ to be held in Colombo on the 24/25th March 2008 and called for contributions in the form of ideas and dialogues. The main objective of the two day conference was to promote pluralism regionally, and to examine its role within the context of specific

countries. The conference was held in Colombo in order to highlight the importance of minority involvement in political processes and encourage the formal inclusion of minority communities in further negotiations for peace, especially within Sri Lanka. The event was unique in that it also sought to establish a 'community of practice', or a sustainable network of practitioners, that would continue to support the integration of minorities, and promote respectful relationships between cultures, faiths and religions in South Asia.

All the papers presented at the Regional Conference were collected and published as a book with the title, 'Powers and Limits of Pluralism in South Asia'. The intention of this book is to demonstrate the extensive benefits of accommodating - and ideally celebrating - diversity, as well as to illuminate the potentially horrific consequences of failing to do so. The articles examine both the positive and negative effects of pluralistic ideals and policies in South Asia, as well as their potential role in the region's future. The contributors drew upon the experiences of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives and Bangladesh to compare which policies, institutions and political structures most effectively promote pluralistic ideals, encourage inclusive public participation and protect minority rights.'

Pluralism is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups

maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization". By adopting pluralistic ideals and policies, groups can maintain their separate identities without threatening inter-group harmony.

Following the conference, NPC drafted a comprehensive list of the components of pluralism, drawn directly from the participants' papers and discussions. This list (see below) was used to structure this collection of articles.

The "points of pluralism" are:

- 1) Energetic Engagement with Diversity
 - a) Furthers Cohesion and coexistence
 - b) Promotes commitment towards a Peaceful society
 - c) Supports and maintains Linguistic and cultural heritage
- 2) Understanding Differences
 - a) Promulgates Knowledge of diversity
 - b) Prioritises teaching of secondary languages
 - c) Considers effects of decisions on all communities
- 3) Encouragement of Dialogue as a Basis
 - a) Ensures interaction at all levels, locations, and sectors
 - b) Furthers conflict resolution
 - c) Fosters a Multi party nature / approach?
 - d) Encourages people to commit to be 'at the table'
 - e) Encourages people to agree to disagree where necessary

4) Maintenance of Democracy

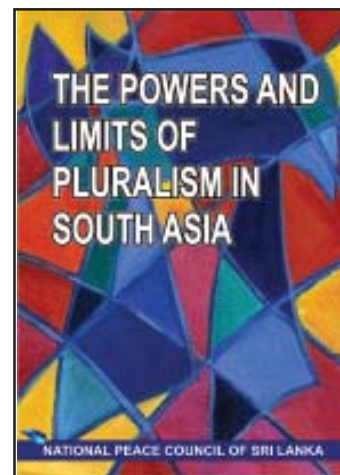
- a) Commits to a Rule of law
- b) Distributes Power and opportunities fairly to individuals and communities
- c) Ensures that Elections are free and fair
- d) Ensures that Minorities have active role in government and leadership
- e) Encourages responsible citizenship and service

5) Respect for Human Rights and Freedoms of Every Individual and Community

- a) Creates respect for Freedom of Speech
- b) Protects Cultural and religious freedoms

- c) Protects Minority rights
- d) Creates respect for Women's rights and issues
- e) Ensures that when Rights are in conflict the best solution for everyone is a commitment to peace

Following the book launch, the project progressed into the next phase, comprising of larger scale of activities with a series of workshops distributed throughout the country, and the launch of a website for the project, to facilitate the collecting and publicising of ideas that emerge during the event. This phase of the project began being implemented in 2009.



Empowerment of women & youth in Tsunami Affected Areas through Rights based Peace Education

General Overview

The impact of the Tsunami on women was different to that on men for several reasons. The threat of gender based violence, the economic insecurity of women (especially those heading households), and mental, physical and emotional health of women are some of the issues that continue to affect women who have survived the force of the tsunami.

The lack of knowledge of women's and children's rights, and ignorance about protection afforded by local and international legal instruments greatly hinders the progress of a large portion of rural Sri Lanka. In the aftermath of the tsunami, this was visible in the form of insensitivity to women's rights. A gender perspective is essential to support an accurate understanding of priorities, inequalities and needs, in order to facilitate more appropriate responses and highlight opportunities and resources for women's involvement in community decision making processes. As such this project aimed to educate both men and women in the identified villages on women and children's rights, provide legal assistance to women through trained women para-legals. The Tsunami recovery program had been implemented in 15 tsunami affected villages in the District of Matara within a period of two years.

The overall objective of the project is to empower women and youth from 750 families in 15 tsunami affected villages, in the District of Matara, in four DS divisions. The project is to be based on implementing of rights and through peace education, and carried out within a period of two years.

Along with the main objective, the project focused on promoting an understanding and respect for women and children's rights among community members. This was done through the establishment of a Women's Mobilization Unit comprising of at least 25 women and training them in women and children's rights, leadership and mobilization skills, peace building and conflict management. Contributing to the protection of women's rights, as fundamental rights through the establishment of a Paralegal Unit comprising 30 women trained as paralegals was also a sub-objective of the project. Further, the project seeks to contribute to sustainable peace and conflict management through the establishment of 15 Peace Committees comprising village gatekeepers trained in peace building and mediation skills, representatives of the Women's Mobilization Unit and the Paralegal Unit.

Finally, there was the promotion of an understanding of minority rights in the contexts of global, diversity and pluralism, power sharing and peace-building. This programme was held for at least 300 male and female students (1st yr A' level) and teachers from 15

village schools, as part of the work on peace-building, which was the last of the sub-objectives of the project.

The direct beneficiaries of the project include 25 women who formed the Women's Mobilization Unit who were trained in Women and Children's rights, Leadership and Mobilization Skills, Peace building and Conflict Management, who . Yet another 30 Women were trained as Paralegals. 300 male and female youth were educated on minority rights. .

30 teachers who also benefitted directly from the programme (2 from each school) were also educated on minority rights. . Direct benefits of the project were also seen as Grama Niladharis, Police officers, school teachers, Zonal Education officers and religious leaders from 15 GN Divisions were educated on the rights of women and children, on good governance, peace building and conflict management (Peace Committees).

Indirectly about 750 families 15 GN divisions benefitted.

This program is managed by the NPC coordinating together with a partner organization, Praja Saviya Sanwardana Padanama.

Activities

Orientation programme

An Orientation program was conducted introducing the project to government employees at the Divisional Secretariat, police personnel, Samurdhi officers, and the Grama Niladharis of the 15

villages, that represented peace committees. Forty two (42) members—22 female and 20 male – attended the meeting. This helped the project gain credibility with the police, government officials in both district and villages. It also created a conducive atmosphere for implementing the activities smoothly as well as leading the paralegals and mobilizers to be more responsive to what and how they work in the village and the it helped the villagers to have confidence in them.

Women's Mobilization Unit and Paralegal team

The Women's Mobilization Unit and Paralegal team comprising of 25 and 30 women were both the first and the main component of the project. The remainder of the planned activities had to be accomplished through the Women's Mobilization Unit and Paralegal team.

Capacity building workshops were conducted for the paralegals and mobilizers and contributed to their heightened self-confidence. The workshops encouraged highly sensitive approaches to the different needs and concerns of villagers, promoted villager participation in sharing information with both units, and resulted in unit members taking leadership roles in their respective communities.

Activities of Paralegals and mobilizers

Paralegals and mobilizers who visited their respective villages identified a total of 584 issues of legal and other

relevant issues confronted by villagers . As shown in the following table, issues on various Rights were the most frequent issue (22%), followed by issues on marital problems (18%), domestic violence (12%), and family disputes(10%). Issues such as getting a copy of birth certificate, marriage certificate, getting a transfer, admitting a child to a school, economic difficulties etc., which do not significantly affect individuals, families or community as a whole, were put into one category, called “other minor issues”, which is 15% .

Issues identified by paralegals and mobilizers within the past three months, by nature of issues

| | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Total | % |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 1. Issues on rights | 49 | 49 | 29 | 127 | 22 |
| 2. Marital problems | 38 | 43 | 25 | 106 | 18 |
| 3. Domestic violence | 35 | 9 | 29 | 73 | 12 |
| 4. Family disputes | 21 | 18 | 19 | 58 | 10 |
| 5. Children's issues | 23 | 13 | 17 | 53 | 9 |
| 6. Legal issues | 29 | 9 | 13 | 51 | 9 |
| 7. Psychological issues | 5 | 14 | 8 | 27 | 5 |
| 8. Other- minor issues | 23 | 55 | 11 | 89 | 15 |
| | 223 | 210 | 151 | 584 | 100.00 |

Paralegals and mobilizers were able to mediate in the resolution of some issues. Cases such as disputes with neighbours have been settled amicably. Other minor issues mentioned before were resolved then and there.

| | Oct. | Nov | Dec. | Total |
|--|------|-----|------|-------|
| Able to mediate/facilitate to resolve issues | 132 | 96 | 140 | 368 |
| Referred to another agency | 25 | 20 | 36 | 81 |
| Could not assist | | | | 70 |

Establishing Peace Committees
 Fifteen Peace Committees were established in fifteen villages with a total of 128 members, (78 females and 40 males). The Peace Committees comprised of village gate keepers such as Grama Niladhari, Samurdhi officers, school teachers, principals, Buddhist priests, and the paralegals and mobilizers who operated in each village. They were trained in peace building and mediation skills through training programs on legal literacy, non-violent communication, mediation techniques and gender. Members of the Ppeace Committees were expected to identify the different needs of their communities, or to arbitrate or mediate issues brought to them, and act as peace makers.

Most of the Peace Committee members contributed towards the improvement of dispute settlement, mediation, discussion and consensus among the villages. They brought in issues that the communities faced and needed to be addressed. Also peace committees helped spread the project message among the community and encourage them to seek more information about project activities, and also to sustain peace and conflict management process in the villages.

Village Awareness Raising Programs

The project conducted Village Awareness Raising programs to address the issues identified at Peace Committee meetings, thereby enlightening the villagers on their

human and legal rights. This allowed for the dissemination of knowledge of basic rights to as many people as possible, especially economically and socially disadvantaged women. The Awareness Raising Programs conducted for villagers were as follows:

training, provided for youth and teachers, initiated a cascading process of information sharing among family members and peers.

Legal Clinics

Paralegals in each village conducted

| | Village | Program |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1 | Naotunna | Women's rights, child rights |
| 2 | Suduwella | Under-aged marriages, legal back ground after tsunami |
| 3 | Kottegoda | Human rights – child rights, women's rights, domestic violence |
| 4 | Thalalla South | Human rights – child rights, women's rights, domestic violence |
| 5 | Palena | Under-aged marriages |
| 6 | Kamburugamuwa | HIV/AIDS |
| 7 | Dickwella | Human rights, women's rights, marriage laws, domestic violence |
| 8 | Devinuwara | Human rights, women's rights, marriage laws, domestic violence |

Peace Education for Youth

In total, fifteen peace education training programs were conducted for over 320 youths, mostly school leavers in an 18–25 age group, from fifteen villages. These programs focused on leadership and personality building, minority rights in a global context, diversity and pluralism, power sharing and peace-building activities. In addition a two day workshop on non-violent communication (NVC) was conducted for a mixed group of 28 (18 females and 10 Males) along with few paralegals and mobilizers

Basic advocacy training on non violent communication, counselling, and pluralism and power sharing programmes was conducted for 30 teachers from 15 villages. This

legal clinics under the supervision and guidance of two legal professionals. 152 women and only 2 men sought legal advice from the legal clinics held in target villages for different issues they were confronting. The paralegals have developed relationships with governmental and non-governmental institutions such as Sri Lanka Legal Aid Commission, Women in Need (WIN), Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) in Matara, who provide legal advice services, as well as undertake legal aid cases for underprivileged women and children in need in the villages. Villagers, especially women, of the targeted villages are now aware of women's and children's basic rights, where they can seek legal advice from, whom to meet for a consultation on legal issues,

as well as how to claim their rights. This was as a result of attending legal clinics conducted by the project. Additionally, legal clinics encouraged women to be proactive in gaining knowledge about their rights, as well as about protecting and claiming them.

A total of 154 clients sought legal assistance from the legal clinics conducted in 15 villages during the reporting period.

Type of issues brought to legal clinics by villagers, specifically by women (at the legal clinics held in 15 villages), by number and percentage:

As shown in the above table and graph, almost half of the issues (48%) were concerning land, as well as tsunami aid related problems, followed by other

minor issues. More than a -half of the clients served by LSC-funded programs are women. More than a half of these women have children. More than a half of these women are victims of domestic violence.

Comparison of the type of issues recorded by paralegals and mobilizers after individual home visits in their respective villages and the type of issues brought to legal clinics show a significant difference. More than one-third of the issues brought to legal clinics were regarding land ownership, whilst home visits by paralegals and mobilizers brought to light family related issues such as family disputes, children's issues, marital problems and domestic violence.

Other efforts for building peace through partnership

Donation to Women's Educational and Research Centre- Bernadeen Silva Memorial Award:

This award by WERC is to enable youth and women to gain recognition for their services to the community. The NPC contributed to this cause as the late Ms Bernadeen Silva had been one of its Governing Council members, while WERC has been one of its supportive partner organisations.

Research on Internally Displaced Persons, Puttalam:

Tens of thousands of Muslims displaced from the north continue to reside in Puttalam putting strain on local resources and local residents. As

a result there are tensions between the host and new settler communities which require periodic bridge building. The NPC supported research on this problem and sponsored a research conference and report.

Commemorating Black July:








The 25th anniversary of the ethnic pogrom of July 1983 against the Tamils was commemorated by a panel discussion to which the NPC invited government representatives, including the Minister of Constitutional Affairs

and the Secretary General of the government's Peace Secretariat to make presentations along with political, civic and religious leaders.

People's SAARC:

The annual meeting of the governments of South Asian countries took place in Colombo, and a parallel meeting of South Asian civil society and activists took place at the Vihara Maha Devi Park. The NPC set up a stall of its publications, and took part in the event in solidarity with fellow South Asians.

Impacts

-  An increased availability of quality public literature and resource materials on peace education
-  Evidence of an increase in productive and innovative activities within the NPC.
-  Evidence of interest and enthusiasm shown towards learning cross-cultural languages among both Sinhala and Tamil communities.
-  A pool of 30 teachers to teach Tamil language at local level through the TOT workshop.
-  Availability of uniform training modules.
-  A syllabus on Sri Lankan Studies and Social Harmony, with a significant collection of supporting knowledge, provided to Jaffna University and its students.
-  Collaboration and mutual dialogue generated among Tamil and Sinhalese academics towards the production of holistic knowledge, and an evidence of interest in furthering such activities.

People, Peace & Participation!

The NPC firmly believes that increasing Civil Society's Participation in Peace-Related Efforts is the foundation for just and sustainable peace (Result 2) and worked with different focus groups to achieve the said result.

The NPC's position in mobilizing people for an attitudinal change

The NPC's current activities in mobilization are founded on creating an attitudinal change towards the devolution of power. The NPC acknowledges that failure to devolve power has unduly penalized provincial, economic, and social development, and has brought innumerable hardships to minority communities living in the Northern and Eastern parts of the Country. It also affirms the results of the studies undertaken on devolution of power and firmly stands in its belief that systematic devolution of power through a Federal system should be undertaken to prevent the present crisis.

The Strategy adopted by NPC to create awareness

Sri Lankan society consists of diverse sectors including social communities such as religious and political groups, the media, trade unions and rural

youth. These are the main communities leading Sri Lankan society through their numerous forums and social activities, which wield a very significant influence to bring about behavioural changes among the civil society.

The NPC, having grasped the importance of these groups, adopted strategies through the Peoples Mobilization movement to achieve its peace related objectives. In 2008, amidst resistance, the NPC fearlessly carried forward the decisive step of changing peoples attitudes. This was at a time when, neither the state nor private sector organizations nor the NGOs/ INGOs took the initiative to educate the civil society to safeguard the inalienable rights of all citizens irrespective of communal or religious considerations.

Therefore during the period concerned, the NPC continued concentrating and consolidating its position, both at local and national level, through the projects funded by CAFOD and SIDA/NORAD to promote peace in the country.

Establishing Networks as Foundation for Mobilization of Civil Society

The overall objective is to build a strong foundation among target groups through non violent attitudinal and behavioural transformation, leading to a just and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka.

In the area of mobilization, amidst the risk of intense disruption by the anti-NGO propaganda carried out by extremists, promotional activities were conducted by the NPC Networks established in 14 districts, under very trying circumstances. Realising the important role Networks play, the NPC concentrated on building the capacity of this network. The aim of NPC is to build up a sustainable base at the regional level so they can organize future activities at both local and national levels. Hence, during the 1st quarter of 2008 the NPC continued to improve the operational capacity and independence of the Networks.

These Networks were set up to promote peoples participation in micro development work, and, to promote peace and coexistence among networks. However, over-concentration on strengthening the position of networks resulted in neglecting the development work that would have brought tangible results.

The process

During the 1st Q. of 2008, NPC undertook the following activities with the Networks.

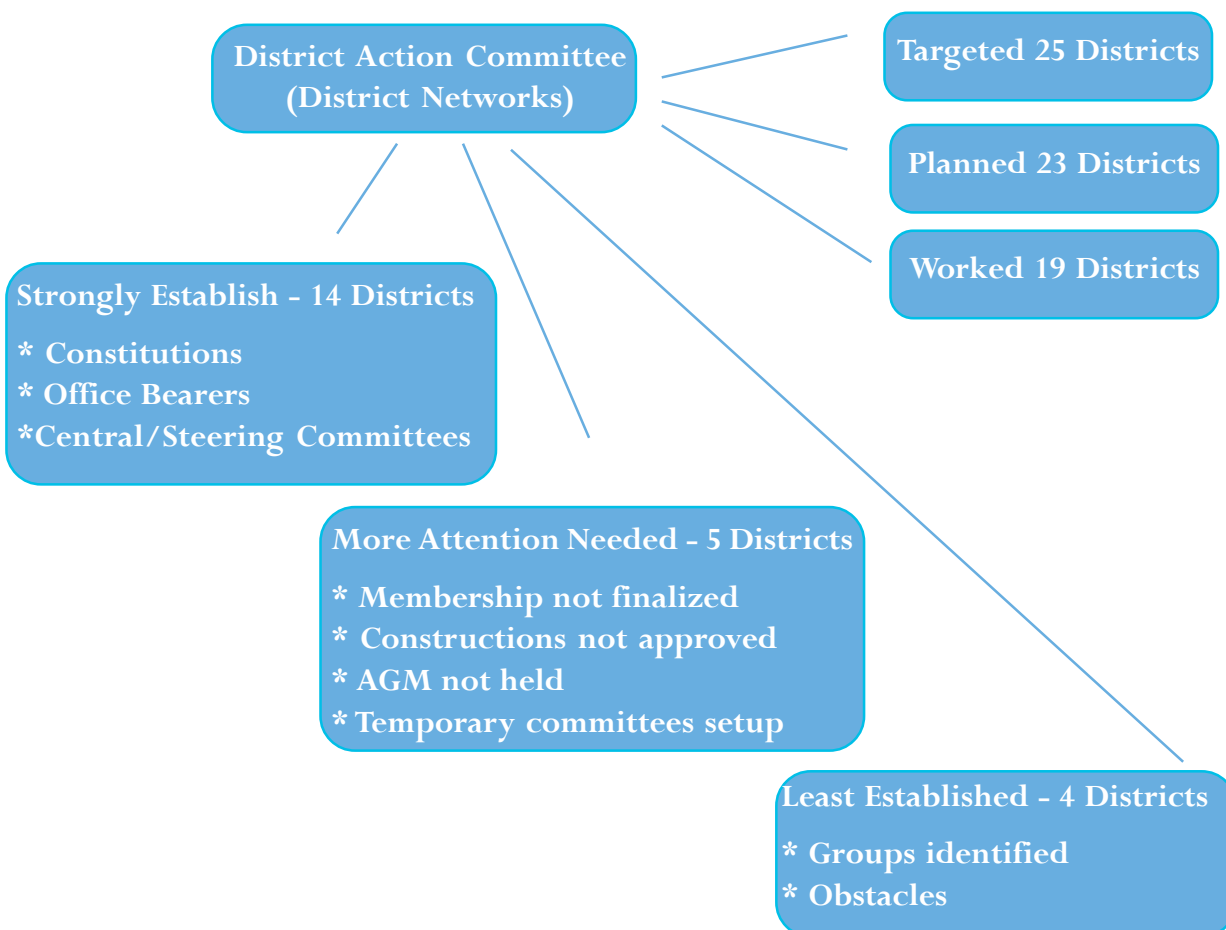
Twenty-Five District Steering Committee meetings were summoned along with four AGMs, 4 sector meetings and 2 Central Committee meetings. These meetings were held to strengthen the functioning of Networks. Such meetings were always coupled with a lecture or presentation on peace, democracy, good governance and awareness of human rights.

Two Seminars were held on the 26th and 29th of March respectively to create awareness. The Seminar on the 26th was held in Colombo on the subject “the national conflict and 13th Amendment” and the book *What Next* was launched. This book contained the proceedings of a peace symposium that the NPC had organized to commemorate the five years of the “Cease Fire Agreement”.

The NPC celebrated each of the past four anniversaries of the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement. This year the 5th anniversary was celebrated with a *major national conference* to which politicians, prominent religious and civil society leaders, members of the NPCs District Network, community leaders and the Ambassadors of Norway, U.S.A. and Japan, and the High Commissioners of Canada and Australia were invited along with a representative from the Indian High Commission.

The *seminar* on the 29th of March was conducted in Colombo for the Muslim community to provide an understanding on the devolution of power. 25 Muslim community leaders participated in this exercise.

Highlights of Networking Program at a glance



Through this process and the activities detailed above, civil society networks from all parts of the country, representatives of the four religions, and civil society groups expressed their unanimous endorsement of a political solution rather than a military solution.

The Seminar on the national conflict and 13th Amendment created great awareness among the participants on the Amendment to the constitution; the Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat himself participated. Through the presentation made by an EU representative, a clear message was given to the participants on the role of EU under the current political scenario.

At the Seminar held with Muslim community leaders, they requested the NPC to conduct a series of such programmes to educate the Muslim community about the devolution of power. These results indicate the success of the activities.

People's Movement for Power Sharing

Experts on Sri Lanka almost universally agree that devolution is the optimal political solution to the country's 25 year long conflict. Power-sharing would accommodate both the Sinhalese majority's interest in maintaining national unity and the Tamils' need for self-determination, dignity and autonomy. While maintaining national cohesion, power-sharing would allow the population in each province the ability to make decisions concerning their own security, land and revenue collection. However, federalism lacks sufficient popular support, mostly due to a general lack of knowledge and the widely held misconception that power-sharing would ultimately lead to the downfall of Sri Lanka.

With this understanding in mind and with the goal of increased public support for national power-sharing policies as a political solution to Sri Lanka's conflict, the NPC worked with Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), to implement the "People's Movement for Power-sharing" project.

Objectives

Long term

- To mobilize, strengthen, and consolidate sustainable and inclusive public support for the peace building process.
- To promote public participation in conflict and political transformation.
- To support an inclusive People's

Movement for peace, democracy and development; and

- To change the negative attitudes, ideas and perceptions that have taken root in the minds of the people about a federal system.

Short term

- To train a cadre of trainers by mobilizing district network leaders, divisional level leaders, women, trade unions, youth groups, local politicians, religious leaders and others at the training workshops; and
- To hold a national conference of key provincial delegates to disseminate and instil correct perceptions and ideas of the real implications of a federal system.

Activities Implemented in 2008

As part of the program the NPC trained 26 Trainees to conduct workshops in 17 districts of the country. It then held forty two workshops in the 17 Districts of Hambantota, Matara, Galle, Kalutara, Colombo, Gampaha, Rathnapura, Moneragala, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Putlam, Badulla, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, and Ampara. Altogether 1100 participants were trained. Consecutively, a study pack and a module in two local languages - Sinhalese and Tamil - were produced and issued to the participants.

Two one-day workshops were conducted as follow-up sessions. Out of the forty two workshops, twenty were held exclusively for "sectors" that comprised local political leaders, religious leaders, trade unionists, civil society leaders, youth leaders, local journalists and media personnel.

At the conclusion of the workshops, three regional conferences were held. The first one was in Matara, on the 25th of July and was attended by 143 delegates of the Southern Province. The second one was held in Colombo, on the 28th of July and 84 delegates from the Western, North Western and Southern Provinces attended. The third and the last one was held in Kurunegala on the 13th of September and was attended by 166 delegates of the Wayaba, Sabaragamuwa, Central, Uva, North Central, and Eastern provinces.

A National Level Conference was held in Colombo on 1st November 2008, and over 260 provincial representatives took part - the cream of those who participated in the workshops and the three Conferences described above. The NPC's strategy was to facilitate the process of mobilization through these representatives, and thus build up a strong sustainable movement for Power Sharing.

Political leaders of many leading parties such as the U.N.P., T.N.A., and the Peoples Alliance attended this conference. The NPC was able to attract the attention of the media and the public because of the participation of Honourable Tissa Vitharane, Minister of Science & Technology who is also the Chairperson of the All Party Representative Committee that works for peace.

At the end of the event, the district delegates endorsed and handed over the "Peoples Manifesto for Power Sharing" to the Chairman of the All Party Conference, Prof. Tissa Vitharana, and to other political leaders including Hon. Tissa Attanayak, the General Secretary of the U.N.P.

Achievements

During the period under review, the NPC was able to create a greater awareness of Federalism and Power Sharing, among the public, most of whom had little knowledge of these issues. This achievement was despite strong opposition and the resistance of certain political activists experienced on several occasions by NPC staff. Though the direct beneficiaries stood at 1690 persons, the multiplier effect of this project is significant.

Federalism and Power Sharing which had been rejected by the majority community, became acceptable and palatable to those who attended the workshops. Initially the attendance at workshops was not encouraging, as people were uninterested and viewed the whole concept with suspicion. However, the concepts gradually became attractive and many - especially University students, the educated, and the elite - voluntarily joined the training programmes. The programme steadily grew in popularity due to the strategies adopted. Therefore, the NPC through much effort conveyed the message that "decentralization of power and devolvement of power enables the locals to take decisions and implement actions for their progressive development".

After the workshop, the participants expressed their wish to carry forward the concepts of Federalism and Power Sharing to the grass roots to educate their kith and kin. There were occasions where extremist groups too attended the workshops, and expressed their satisfaction with the manner of delivery of lectures and the knowledge imparted to the participants, and they requested workshops in the Districts that had not been targeted earlier.

The Humanitarian Crisis and the Role of Religious Leaders

Multi-religious Advocacy and Action to Address the Humanitarian Crisis

The mounting ethnic crisis and the alarming proportion of death and destruction caused by the civil war in 2008, brought in shock waves among the peace loving people of the country. Unfortunately, no governmental or non governmental organization took the initiative to harness the support of national and international religious leaders to bring the crisis situation under control until the two NGOs, the PAFERAL and NPC, came forward.

Therefore in 2008 the collaborative efforts of these two NGOs succeeded in bringing the World Conference of Religions for Peace together with the National Chapter the National Conference of Religions for Peace, to adopt a multi religious approach to the ethnic conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka. Mr Kingsley Rodrigo in his welcome address informed the audience that the Council of the World Religious Conference for Peace presently operates in 120 countries, and with the Council set up in Sri Lanka on the 28th of April, it would be the 121st Country that had entered into this net work.

Three major religious symposiums were held in Kandy (28th April), Trincomalee (29th April) and Anuradhapura (7th and 8th November) with the participation of national and

international religious leaders representing Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christian faiths. The countries represented were U.S.A, Japan, Cambodia, South Africa, Pakistan, and Norway.

Inauguration of the Inter- Religious Council of Sri Lanka

The representatives of the conference selected the following Religious leaders to the Council.

1. Ven. Kotagoda Dhammawansa Thero
2. Rev. Galagama Sri Attadassi Thero
3. Ven. Aluthgama Dhammananda Nayaka Thero
4. Ven. Maduluwe Sobita Nayake Thero
5. Ven. Pragnawatte Seevalie Thero
6. Ven. Nagoda Amarawansa Thero
7. Most Rev. Vyanee Fernando
8. Most Rev. Rayappu Joseph
9. Most Rev. Norbett M. Andradi
10. Most Rev Kingsley Swami Pillai
11. Moulavi Niyaz Mohamad
12. Moulavi Rizwie
13. Moulavi Abdul Alim
14. Moulavi M.S. Fauzel
15. Moulavi Shaul Alim
16. Rt. Rev. Kumara Illangasinghe
17. Ms. Sivanandanie Doraisamy
18. Kurukkal Parameshwara Swamie
19. Kurukkal Sayed Sharma Swamie from Jaffna
20. Ven. Nagoda Amrawansa Thero

Important achievements

Mr. Kyoichi Sugino, Special Envoy of the Secretary General WCRP, in his concluding speech at the Kandy conference, summarized the following three important historic achievements.

1. Establishment of the Inter Religious Council in Sri Lanka.

It was the first symbolic occasion where all important Buddhist Monks of the highest level gathered together with Catholic, Christian Hindu and Muslim leaders, and women leaders, to form this important Council. This was a very historic event.

2. Deep commitment to taking action together.

Religious leaders from different countries made commitments to making this Inter-Religious Council operational. The members of the Council visited Trincomalee to meet the Catholic, Christian, Hindu and Muslim religious leaders and it was the first concrete action of the Inter-Religious Council of Sri Lanka after its formation,

3. Establishment of World global solidarity.

The World Religious Council of Religious Leaders with 40 years of experience in inter-religious cooperation assured the Inter-Religious Council of Sri Lanka of their assistance in all its efforts. This confirmation of global solidarity was the third achievement of this conference.

Outcome of the Conference

- The religious leaders issued a joint statement that endorsed the “achievement of peace through a political solution that is acceptable to all communities, a multi-religious initiative to address the humanitarian crisis would open up new

opportunities for change, and change of heart, which is the supreme realm of religion and spirituality.”

- As a result of the conference, senior religious leaders of the Religions for Peace Inter-religious Council of Sri Lanka, together with world religious leaders, met with His Excellency, President Mahinda Rajapaksa on 25th November to discuss the unbearable conditions of civilians trapped in heavy military operations in the north of the country. The religious leaders offered to work with the government, the opposition parties and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) to address the humanitarian crisis.
- The Religions for Peace delegations also met with Honourable. Ranil Wickremesinghe, the leader of Opposition, and Honourable. R. Sampanthan, the leader of the Tamil National Alliance, to further advance the multi-stakeholder approach to develop the needed humanitarian corridors and non-military zones.

Way Forward

Though war had ended, nearly 300,000 IDPS are languishing in makeshift camps under trying circumstances. At this crucial moment the humanitarian crisis and the trauma faced by these innocent people cannot simply be ignored. As an impartial religious body, the Inter Religious Council in Sri Lanka must intervene to open discussions with the Government to prevent a future occurrence of this nature. The NPC intervention to reactivate the three achievements at the Kandy conference should be explored in fairness to the population living in the North.



National and International Religious Leaders at the Anuradhapura and Kandy International Religious Leaders Conferences

Establishing 'People's Forum' to promote peace

The People's Forums have been supported by the Academy for Education and Development (AED) and implemented by the NPC of Sri Lanka since 2004. Following the signing of the cease-fire agreement and the creation of One-Text Initiative as a track one program, donors and local national organizations realized the need to bring the voices of people from the grassroots into the political peace process.

The People's Forums were initially designed by AED, NPC and three other national organizations with this objective in mind. But with the rapid political deterioration of the peace talks, the December 2004 tsunami disaster, the People's Forums adjusted their operation and vision to focus on peace building at the local community level, with a vision for long-term investment in people's capacity to address peace building, democracy and good governance issues.

The vision of the project is to arrive at a Sri Lankan society that has changed socially and culturally as a result of personally transformed and empowered citizens that together with its political system embraces peace, democracy and good governance.

This project had the mission of establishing equality, justice and self respect, ensuring constructive

engagement between civil society and political leadership, ensuring inclusive and diverse participation, developing a non-violent culture of social action and creating an alternative bottom-up political structure.


Objectives of this project were to promote constructive engagement between civil society and political leadership, and evolve people's forum into an independent self governing and self reliant movement. By developing networks and links between People's Forums, and collaborating and networking with other like-minded movements, the project achieved its results.

Due to the People's Forums project, a strong platform to voice people's issues and problems has been formed. These forums included members of every community, and during the forum meeting the issues of all communities were discussed. This created an opportunity for peaceful and harmonious living among the communities, which in turn contributed towards their understanding of and interest in peace. Representatives from the Police Department and other Government sectors participated in every meeting and programme of this project. They also provided solutions and support to overcome the issues and problems in many of the People's Forums. A powerful mechanism with representation from Government has been established.

The project created an opportunity to bring the civil society stakeholders together to work on a common vision. A major result of this program was that the NPC achieved excellent coordination and networking among the GS, DS and Government Sectors. The People's Forums created awareness among the people regarding their rights and needs, and encouraged them to achieve solutions on their own and to voice their problems directly to the relevant institutions. Due to the good coordination between the village communities and the People's Forums, the Forums can easily receive and identify the requests and issues, and forward them to the relevant institutions and authorities for resolution.

As the Forums fostered the relationship between religious leaders it was observed that they were acting more cohesively in their respective societies towards building a peaceful environment. As a result of the training and skill development activities that were provided to People's Forums members, they were able to guide their community to a considerable extent. Thus the NPC has gained a stronger volunteer team while society has enriched its pool of resources available for management and guidance.

A collaborative approach for mobilizing people for peace was also undertaken by the NPC

 **Facilitating Attendance by Catholic Nuns from Jaffna at the National Conference**

The Women's Desk of the Catholic Church organised a national conference on peace to which NPC provided the funding for 20 nuns and lay people to travel to Colombo from Jaffna and give voice to the sentiments of the people of Jaffna.

 **Vanni Cultural Foundation, Puttalam**

This organisation is led by a Buddhist monk who mobilises inter-religious and civic groups to receive peace and human rights education in a systematic manner. This institution has been awarding diplomas to participants who receive instruction from faculty members drawn from universities and NGOs.

 **Technical Support to Buddhist Monk, Matara**

The Ven Baddegama Samitha, a former Member of Parliament, required assistance to write up a project proposal for funding for peace and inter-religious programmes. NPC provided assistance to hire a report writer.

 **Mobilising Pre School Teachers for Peace**

With the support of the NPC, one of its partner organisations, the Federation of Trade Unions for Development, organised its annual meeting with pre school teachers who are in a position to mould the minds of the youngest generations for peace.

Impacts

- ❏ Development of knowledge of members and utilization of the same to recruit more members
- ❏ Participation in peace work increased
- ❏ Knowledgeable and committed groups available to work for power sharing and peace
- ❏ Established a pool of trainers at local level for power sharing
- ❏ A foundation for people movement was created
- ❏ A representative cross section of activists at local level are part of the network
- ❏ Women's participation was ensured and increased
- ❏ A strong base for the NPC work at district and national level was created.
- ❏ The membership at district network level in 14 districts increased from, less than 800 to 1890.
- ❏ Volunteerism is fostered
- ❏ A tendency towards transparency and accountability increased
- ❏ District committees to promote peace were established
- ❏ Publicity campaigns through media at local level were carried out
- ❏ Coalitions with like minded organizations were built
- ❏ Awareness on the part of affected groups, of the value of peace to them was increased
- ❏ Participation of civic groups and organizations at local and national level was fostered
- ❏ A stage for expression of people's voices was provided
- ❏ Collective action for collective well-being was organised
- ❏ Skills on democratic discussion and debate were developed



International Peace Day - Peace is Possible



Handing over of the Manifesto on Power to Prof. Thissa Vitharana by Kanthi of Galle



People's Forum Members at a discussion



Discussion Seminar on Power Sharing



Handing over of certificates to the Trainers of the Power sharing project

Our peace activism underscores the fundamental role civil society plays in peacebuilding. Our broad, multi-level network of trained activists strengthens support for peacebuilding and maintains a continuous call for peace from the people.

Struggling for a negotiated solution

As mandated NPC always has struggled to promote positive dialogue between aggrieved parties in conflict. (Result3)

Despite the war and the emphasis on a military solution in the general political debate, the NPC was able to demonstrate that it could motivate its constituencies to advocate a political solution based on the concepts of devolution and power sharing. This was through several community-level peace education programmes that culminated in national level conferences at which participants issued public statements on their positions.

The NPC published some of these statements along with the names of signatories as advertisements in the newspapers as part of its national level advocacy effort.

In spite of limited funding the NPC was also able to conduct all its planned programmes without encountering direct opposition. These programmes included the establishment of a high level inter-religious committee consisting of leaders from all religions, conducting a series of power sharing workshops on constitutional arrangements, imparting knowledge of legal and minority rights to women and youth, and media exposure visits to the conflict zones.

At the national level too the NPC continued with its peace education and peace advocacy campaign. It issued over 20 regular media

releases on the evolving political situation, pointing out violation of human rights and humanitarian law, and opportunities to address these violations and recommence non-violent based political process aimed at conflict resolution. Due to the environment of threat that loomed over anti-war and pro-peace advocacy and actions, especial care was taken in drafting NPC statements. The statements were not attributed to a single individual - rather the entire governing council took responsibility for them.. In addition, the NPC contributed to the public debate on war, peace and a political solution through the regular commentaries of its executive director, with over 150 newspaper, internet and magazine articles being published in English, Sinhala and Tamil.

Due to these efforts and the contribution of the NPC infrastructure, the executive director was awarded two prestigious international awards in 2008: the Non-Violence Award of the Swedish-based International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Sakai Peace Contribution award from Japan. These awards enhanced the credibility and recognition afforded to the NPC and provided encouragement to other civil society organizations that are continuing to take up the challenge of working for peace, justice and

reconciliation in the country.

As well as the honour of the inaugural Sakai Peace Award, the NPC's Executive Director, Dr Jehan Perera, received the sum of 3 million Japanese Yen (approximately SLR 3 million). He donated two thirds of this to the NPC.

One intention was to establish the NPC-Sakai Peace Fellowship with the objectives of

1. recognizing the contributions to peace of community leaders
2. encouraging others to emulate them
3. empowering the awardees to make greater efforts for peace and ethnic harmony.

These peace fellowships will be awarded on an annual basis. The criteria for making these awards will be track records of

1. independence and non partisanship
2. integrity and consistency
3. risks taken and sacrifices made, in the course of working for peace, justice, human rights and reconciliation.

In addition a further sum of Rs 1 million was set aside for staff welfare and other worthy charitable causes on account of the challenges faced by staff and other peace workers in the conduct of their work in the current climate of intimidation, and their support to the work of the NPC during this difficult period.

The National Peace Council extends its appreciation to the Executive Director for his generosity in sharing the dividends of his hard work with likeminded peace workers and staff who are the powerhouse of peace work at the NPC.

Impacts

- 📡 Increased recognition of the efforts of NPC in the peace advocacy
- 📡 Executive Director was awarded the Non Violence Award of the Swedish based International Fellowship of Reconciliation
- 📡 Executive Director was awarded the Sakai Peace Contribution award from Japan

Towards a just society through Rights & Reforms!

The NPC, having recognized the importance of “Rights & Reforms” in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, undertook several activities to safeguard the inalienable rights of civil society, focusing on achieving the Target Group’s understanding of peace-oriented constitutional reforms (Result 4) and strengthening knowledge of human rights and human rights laws (Result 5).

During the period concerned, the NPC initiated the following events with like-minded organizations to consolidate its strength while upholding the rights of the aggrieved parties in this area of concern.

Picketing campaign to protest against the attack on leading human rights lawyer’s residence

The NPC, along with a number of like-minded organizations such as the Free Media Movement, the Center for Policy Alternatives, and People’s Action for Free and Fair Election, organized a picketing campaign on 3rd October at Lipton Circus. This was a protest against the grenade attack on the residence of the Executive Director of Transparency International, a renowned human rights lawyer and civil activist. The National Peace Council mobilized 112 people for this picketing campaign.

Celebration of International Children’s Day-2008

To celebrate International Children’s Day-2008, the NPC held an arts and

craft competition for children in the multi-ethnic town of Trincomalee and held a workshop for teachers on Rights-Based Education, on 11th October 2008.

Ninety students from Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim schools participated, spending the day together at the Club Oceanic Hotel, Trincomalee. After a session of entertainment, which encouraged them to step outside the conventional ethnicity-based thinking, the children were taught the basic techniques of origami, collage, sculpting, and pastels. Using these newly acquired skills, the children of the different ethnic groups presented an expression of their own ideas on the beauty of living in harmony and peace.

At the same venue, the NPC also held a workshop for teachers on Rights-Based Education. Using their personal expressions of rights-based education, the teachers discussed the capacity of the current education system to meet their students’ needs, and suggested

ways in which it could be improved. The government officials who attended the workshop expressed the possibility of presenting the teachers' recommendations to the higher authorities of the Education Ministry.

The day culminated in a time of sharing, as children sang and expressed their own hopes for peace that impressed all participants including the teachers. Prizes were awarded to the best creation from each group. Certificates and gift packets (of food, stationery items, and books) were distributed to those who were present.

Human Rights Day 2008

To celebrate the 60th International Human Rights day, the NPC collaborated with the NGO Consortium Ampara, Lions Club Ampara, the Bar Association, the G.A and police of Ampara and the media to conduct a workshop for Track II-level people (i.e., police, religious leaders, media, lawyers, community leaders and government officials) in the multi-ethnic district of Ampara on 10th December 2008. The theme of this workshop was "Human Dignity and Justice for All of Us". The workshop discussed how to maintain good governance, with particular emphasis on safeguarding and upholding human rights. There were 110 participants in this workshop. An action committee was formed from the participants.

A prominent lecturer of the Faculty of Law at the University of Colombo delivered a lecture on "Human Rights and its Implications".

Symposium on 17th amendment and Book Launch

The NPC held a seminar on the 17th amendment and a book launch in the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies on 17th December 2008. The book is a collection of articles written by eminent persons on the 17th amendment. It includes different political perspectives on the failure to implement the 17th amendment. Political party views (TNA and JHU) and the role of civil society in the 17th amendment were also discussed at the symposium.

Lion's Club Peace Programme, Batticaloa

With the support of the NPC, the Lion's Club of Batticaloa has been undertaking a programme of youth education through workshops and seminars. These are young people who have no access to the resources, persons and materials that could free them from the struggle for daily existence, and motivate them to become part of an empowered citizenry.

Human Rights Cases

There are continuing reports of abductions and disappearances, and the NPC has intervened on occasion to assist the victims of these crimes. This has required modest payments to lawyers, as most of the logistical work has been done on a voluntary basis by NPC staff and governing council members.

Impacts

- ❏ Promoted inter-ethnic solidarity among 90 children from 16 schools in Trincomalee district.
- ❏ Supported education within the human rights discourse.
- ❏ Involved the Education Department of Sri Lanka in our programmes.
- ❏ Encouraged adults' knowledge of child rights and emphasized it as a part of Human Rights.
- ❏ Strengthened the NPC network in the Trincomalee and Ampara areas.
- ❏ Built and strengthened partnerships with police, government officials, legal professionals and civil society leaders.
- ❏ Promoted understanding of peace-oriented constitutional reforms.
- ❏ Strengthened knowledge of Human rights and human rights laws, and how they underpin a just social framework, among the target group.
- ❏ Increased awareness of the existence of the 17th amendment and the need for it in society.
- ❏ Encouraged citizens and political party members to learn and understand the need of an independent body to appoint heads of key government bodies.



Joining hands for media freedom by picketing for Mr. Weliamuna



Chief speakers at the conference on 17th Amendment



International Human Rights day celebration in Ampara



Mr. Upali Weerawardena, addressing the teachers on Child Rights



International Children's Day

Peace cannot be achieved without justice. By raising awareness of the rights people are entitled to, and promoting a society where all human aspirations can be achieved, our endeavors seek to mobilize a social transformation towards a just, and sustainable peace.

We believe in Quality Output!

Ensuring the quality of NPC's peace programmes (Result 6) is envisaged by the NPC as a pragmatic process. To ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of all NPC programmes and projects, a quality assurance unit has been formed, and monitoring tools and techniques are now in place. However, following changes to the management of the unit, further strengthening of the unit is being undertaken.

The organizational structure of NPC has an inbuilt mechanism to constantly monitor physical and financial progress at different levels and at regular intervals, through Program Coordinating Meetings, Management Committee Meetings, Board of Directors Meetings and Governing Council Meetings. Monthly Progress Meetings serve as the monitoring tool where issues are reported, and decisions

made and followed up. However the capacity of Monitoring and Evaluation staff needs to be improved and developed.

Quality Reports have been produced on events conducted by NPC, while multiple proposals have been written and submitted to different donors.

An evaluation of "Power sharing" is in progress, and is within the 2008/2010 Action Plan.



Impacts

- Focus on results and impacts has been improved
- Activities have been streamlined
- Quality Reports have been produced on events conducted by NPC.

Reaching out via media!

NPC teams worked hand in hand among themselves to ascertain peace messages reaching out to the target audience (Result 8) and collective actions were launched to achieve the said need. Increased and Improved peace messages were communicated to the target audience

During the period concerned, the NPC carried out a promising campaign to raise awareness of peace-related activities throughout the Country. A special feature during this period was the interest shown by the media in the NPC's programmes. Media people attended and gave wide publicity through the electronic and printed media for almost all activities conducted by the NPC. This publicity from the mass media ensured the prominence of the NPC as a peace promoter.

- ◆ 25 press conferences were held to create awareness among the public about the current political situation, good governance, peace, human rights, and women's and children's rights. These events created a lot of publicity and attracted popular attention.
- ◆ During the provincial elections in the East, NPC organized a "Media Personnel Visit" to the region. It is notable that for a majority of participants this was the first time they had been to the East. It was an eye opener for them, and they produced a lot of media coverage that helped educate the public about the situation in the East. This

coverage created awareness among the civil society in the South for the first time.

- ◆ A book titled "*Sama Yama*" was produced and published. A thousand copies were released in all three languages. This publication contained the activities and press releases made by the NPC during the 2007 and 2008.
- ◆ Media Coverage was arranged for the "Inter-Religious Peace Council" that was held in Jaffna in December 2008. A special English-language publication about the event was also released.
- ◆ Media coverage for the Slogans Competition on Human Rights was organized and carried out. The role of the media team in this competition was significant, and contributed to the success of the event. A souvenir containing these slogans was compiled and released on the Human Rights Day.
- ◆ The media team compiled and released a book titled "*A Dove Sits*

on *My Shoulder*". This book contains articles written by our Executive Director Dr. Jehan Perera, on peace, human rights, good governance, devolution of power, and the contemporary situation on the ground in Sri Lanka. One thousand five hundred copies of the book were released and distributed. Copies were also distributed to the libraries of Universities in Sri Lanka.

- ◆ The media team compiled and released a documentary on the knowledge and experience gained by the journalists who visited Nepal and Jaffna. A video documentary was prepared on the Inter-Religious Peace Council event held in Jaffna. The visuals were broadcast on television, and audio programmes were also broadcast on national radio. The event produced a strong voice for peace.

Media releases

During the year NPC issued 28 Media releases on a broad range of topics relating to the war, prospect for negotiations, human rights and good governance.

These media releases represented the viewpoint of NPC as an organization. Every statement was carefully vetted by the governing council and members of the staff prior to being released.

These statements of NPC received wide publicity on the internet, and print and electronic media, both in Sri Lanka and internationally as they represented a civil society perspective on contentious issues that tended to polarize the communities in Sri Lanka.

Nangai Magazine, Jaffna

This magazine is published by the Women's Development Centre in Jaffna and, supported by the NPC, they publish three issues annually. Through this effort, women in Jaffna were able to express themselves on a range of issues including peace. This magazine received a warm welcome from the public.

Printing Photographs of the Disappeared

On International Human Rights Day, several civic groups organized demonstrations and meetings to commemorate the day, and the violations of human rights in the country. The NPC assisted the Committee for the Investigation of the Disappeared to print large-size photographs of missing persons.

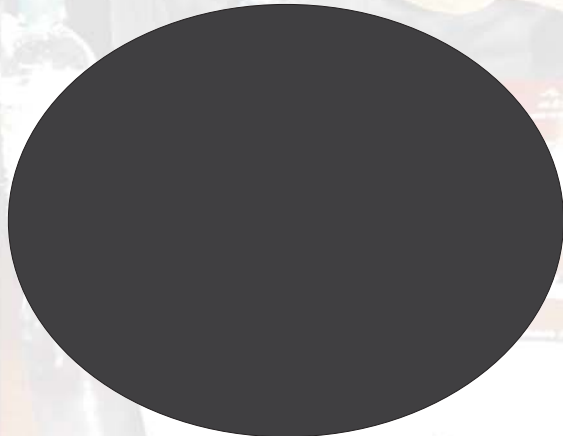
- ◆ Abrogation of Ceasefire Agreement Will Escalate Spiral of Violence and War Against Terrorism is Leading to More Terror
- ◆ Culture of Violence Threatens to Engulf Whole Country
- ◆ Joint Statement: Abrogation of Ceasefire Agreement Will Escalate Spiral of Violence
- ◆ Joint Statement: Abrogation of Ceasefire Agreement Will Escalate Spiral of Violence
- ◆ Opportunity to Revive the Constitutional Council and Ensure Good Governance



We have a wide media coverage



Our Publications



Public awareness is a key component of spreading peace. Our media unit works to persuade the people of the values of peace, and effectively engage them in this arena.

- ◆ Human Toll Shows Necessity for Alternative to War
- ◆ Bombings will Generate Hatred and Make Compromise More Difficult
- ◆ Assassination is the antithesis of democratic rule of law
- ◆ International Award for NPC's Executive Director
- ◆ Pluralism Conference Highlights Importance of Rule of Law, Human Rights and Devolution
- ◆ Safeguard madhu sharine from war
- ◆ Arrest Highlights Vulnerability of Journalists
- ◆ Government Must Set Up Independent Investigative Mechanism
- ◆ A Lamentable Loss to Civil Society and to the Country
- ◆ Eastern Election must not lead to further alienation
- ◆ Flawed democracy and prosecution of war cannot win peace
- ◆ Safeguarding civilians is primary calling of both parities.
- ◆ Collateral damage will be to entire country's detriment
- ◆ Ceasefire offer highlights offer highlights crisis of credibility
- ◆ Bomb Attack on Human Rights Lawyer and Civic Activist indicative of a dangerous trend
- ◆ Government has duty to provide adequate protection
- ◆ Support humanitarian initiative by religious leaders
- ◆ Redouble efforts for peace after Mumbai attacks
- ◆ Fresh Ceasefire Proposal Not Viable Without Political Framework
- ◆ Humanitarian organisations have key role to play
- ◆ Response to Interim Report of Parliamentary Select Committee

Impacts

- 📡 Fortified relationship of the NPC with electronic and mass media .
- 📡 Increased release of well-focused publications on peace message.
- 📡 Quality reports produced on events conducted by the NPC.
- 📡 Released video documentary of NPC activities after every activity.
- 📡 Wrote and submitted proposals to various donors.

Administration

The main functions of the Administration Unit has been to ensure the smooth running of the organization's processes by coordinating the requirements of the Teams operating within the National Peace Council in order to accomplish their assignments. In addition to this, it overlooked the aspects of Human Resources too.

Human Resources:

The aspect handled as Human Resources at NPC, is the organizational function that deals with the staff and issues related to the staff. This also includes Recruitment, Performance Management, Maintaining and updating of the personnel files of the existing staff.

In the broad sense the facilities extended to the staff continued this year too. i.e.

- Medical and Personal Accident insurance cover
- Grants to enhance their skills and knowledge
- Interest free loans

Further to keep a healthy relationship within the staff and to provide more facilities, the Staff Welfare Society was established in February 2008 and is functioning to-date.

Resignations

The Chief Operations Executive, Mr. Upali Attanayake and Head of the Gender Unit, Mrs. Saro Thiruppathy relinquished their duties during the year. Two other Field staff and an Accounts Executive also resigned during the year.

Recruitment

In April 2008, Mrs. Regina Ramalingam was recruited as the Chief Operations Executive and only other recruitment in 2008 was Ms. Jega Mahalingam to the Finance Unit.

On joining NPC, the COE distributed a questionnaire to the staff to assess their knowledge in keeping with their positions. As an outcome from this it was strongly felt that the staff capacity had to be enhanced and a workshop was conducted in July which was beneficial for the individuals as well as the organization. At the conclusion of this workshop, the programme staff were re-designated and it was imperative that their Terms of References be changed to suit their new positions. This was done accordingly.

As the next step to keep the teams together and provide a better working environment the work stations were installed which was shelved earlier due the cost element. This has rationalized the utilization of space in the office and enables the staff to interact easily with one another.

Support Unit

The new Strategic Plan which was developed for the period 2008 to 2010 had to be implemented from 2008. However, in April with the recruitment of Mrs. Ramalingam as the Chief Operations Executive, she drew up an Action Plan for the year in keeping with the Strategic Plan. This outlined the duties of the Administrative Unit very distinctively, which made our task easier.

Providing logistics to the Programme unit in order to conduct their activities effectively as per the action plan was a core function of the support Unit. This included, providing transport for their assignments in 15 districts on one hand whilst gathering, processing, and communicating information to the units in order to conduct their workshops.

Conclusion

The administration has always sought to be understanding and flexible with staff concerns. We appreciate the loyalty and commitment they have shown in an environment that has sometimes been hostile to the positions taken by the Organization. We have endeavoured to keep our staff together as a Team, while maintaining the discipline and decorum required in an office environment.

A word of thanks to the Board of Directors and the Governing Council Members who were elected at the Annual General Meeting held on the 18th of June 2008, who have extended their support and valuable time to the efficient functioning of the programmes of the National Peace Council.

The only change in the Governing Council appointment was the non-election of Mr. Mano Rajasingham, due to ill health and on the 11th of October 2008, the National Peace Council was informed of his demise. He served as a Governing Council Member for a decade. We are saddened by his loss and condole with his bereaved family.

Financial Review/Highlights - 2008

M/s Hulugalle Wickramanayake & Co was assigned the task of carrying out a detailed Financial System Audit to determine the strength of the Financial Control System and make recommendations on weaknesses or gaps. This comprehensive financial system audit was carried out in year 2008 in addition to the annual financial audit carried out by M/s Price Waterhouse Coopers

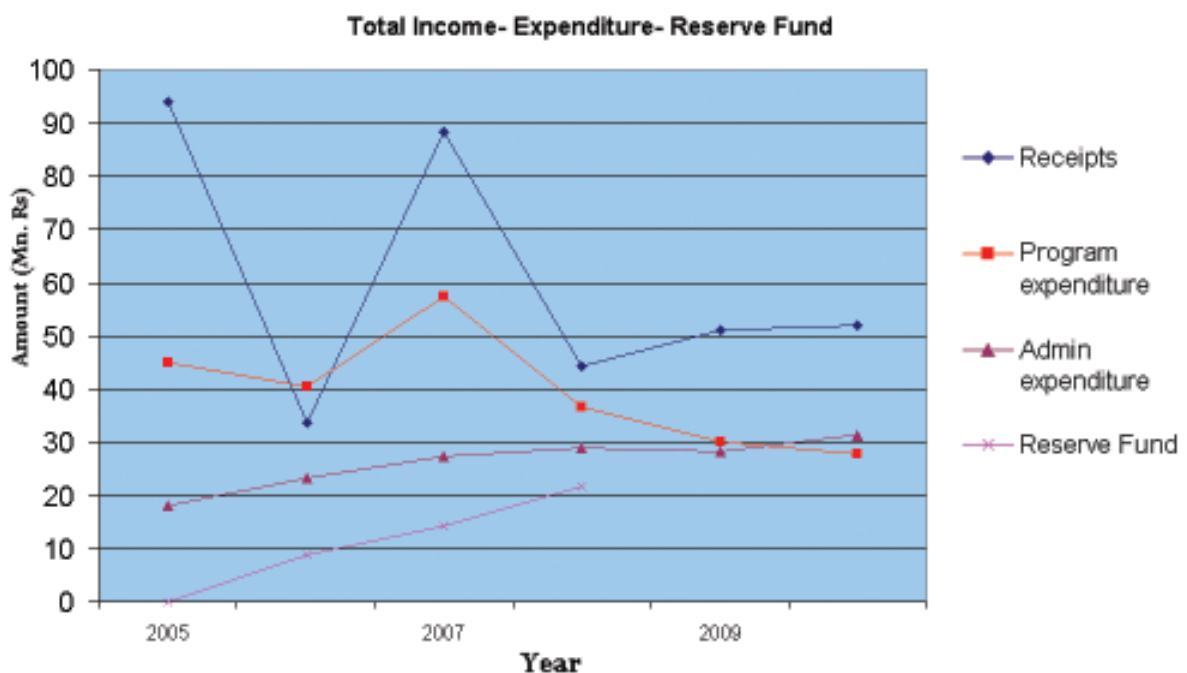
Following two funds were created during the year using donations given by Dr Jehan Perera

- NPC- SAKAI peace award fund
- Staff welfare fund

Amount invested in a Gratuity fund was increased by Rs 863,587/50 allowing NPC to pay gratuity to its staff at any time.

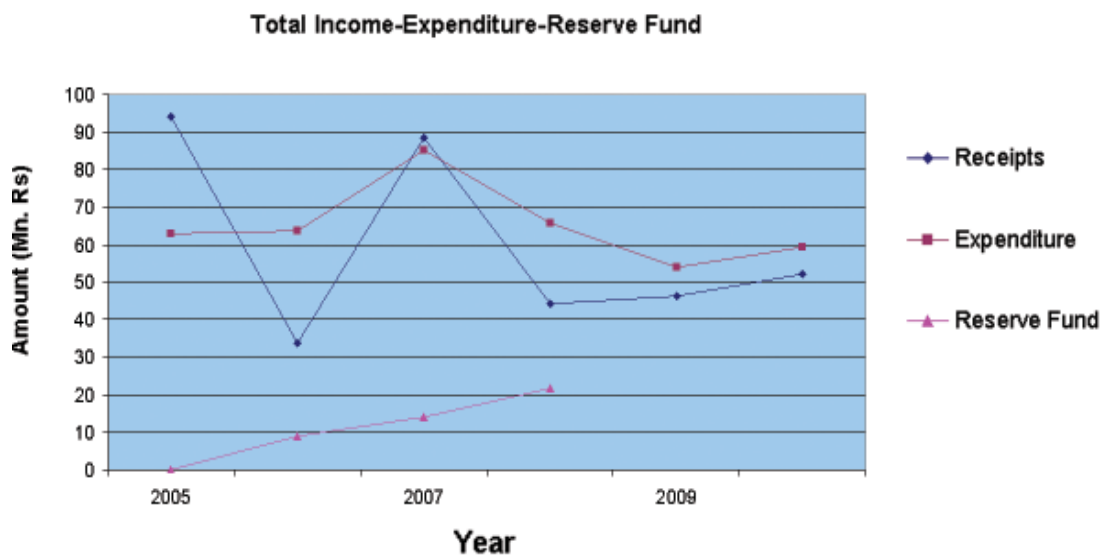
TOTAL INCOME- EXPENDITURE AND RESERVE FUND 2005-2010 (Mn.Rs)

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Receipts | 94.02 | 33.58 | 88.33 | 44.21 | 51.17 | 52.08 |
| Program expenditure | 44.90 | 40.36 | 57.57 | 36.63 | 30.22 | 27.95 |
| Admin expenditure | 18.15 | 23.46 | 27.41 | 29.08 | 28.49 | 31.33 |
| Reserve Fund | - | 8.93 | 14.22 | 21.87 | | |



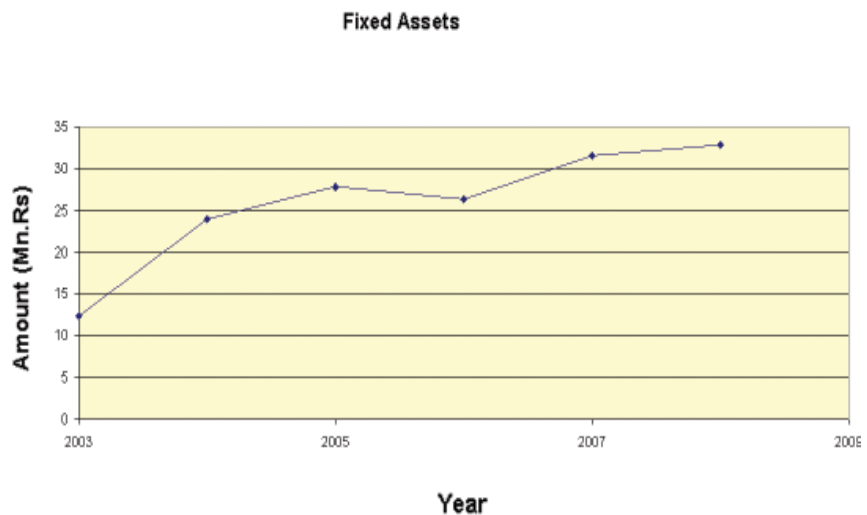
TOTAL INCOME- EXPENDITURE AND RESERVE FUND 2005-2010 (Mn.Rs)

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Receipts | 94.02 | 33.58 | 88.33 | 44.21 | 46.37 | 52.08 |
| Expenditure | 63.05 | 63.82 | 84.98 | 65.71 | 53.89 | 59.28 |
| Reserve Fund | - | 8.93 | 14.22 | 21.87 | | |



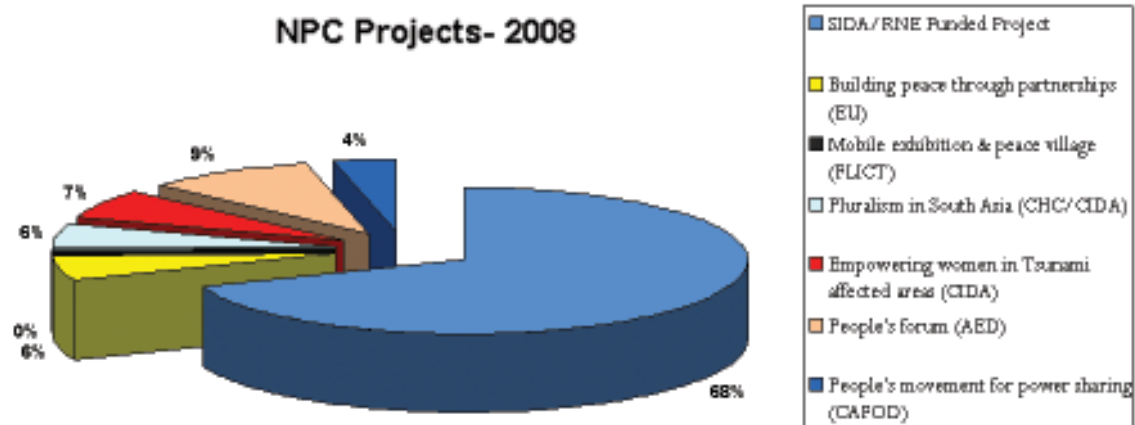
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS (COST) Mn.Rs

| Year | Amount (Mn.Rs) |
|------|----------------|
| 2003 | 12.32 |
| 2004 | 23.96 |
| 2005 | 27.84 |
| 2006 | 26.37 |
| 2007 | 31.50 |
| 2008 | 32.85 |



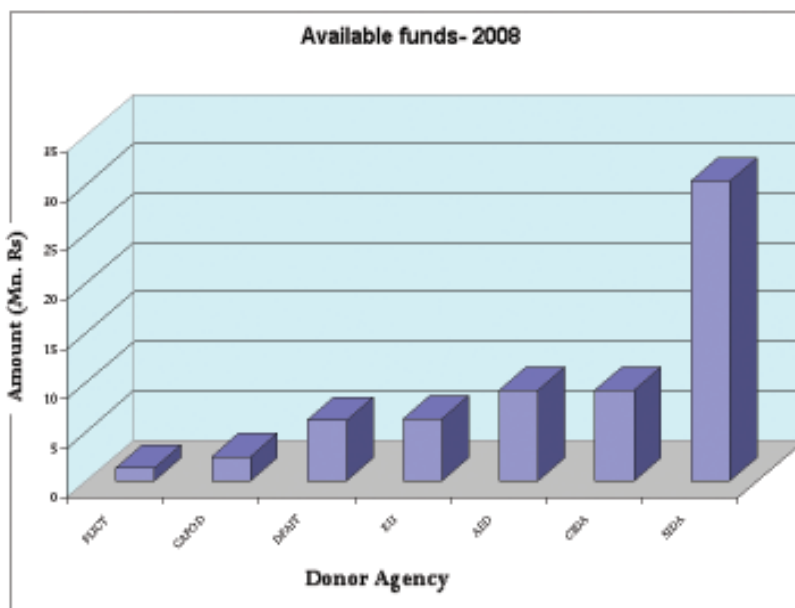
NPC PROJECTS- 2008

| Project Title | Amount (Mn.Rs) | % |
|---|----------------|--------|
| SIDA/RNE Funded Project | 45.56 | 68.92 |
| Building peace through partnerships (EU) | 3.71 | 5.61 |
| Mobile exhibition & peace village (FLICT) | 0.07 | 0.11 |
| Pluralism in South Asia (CHC/CIDA) | 3.71 | 5.61 |
| Empowering women in Tsunami affected areas (CIDA) | 4.32 | 6.53 |
| People's forum (AED) | 6.30 | 9.54 |
| People's movement for power sharing (CAFOD) | 2.44 | 3.68 |
| | 66.11 | 100.00 |
| | | |



AVAILABLE FUNDS- 2008 (WITH B/F BALANCES)

| Donor Agency | Amount (Mn.Rs) |
|--------------|----------------|
| FLICT | 1.25 |
| CAFOD | 2.44 |
| DFAIT | 6.06 |
| EU | 6.19 |
| AED | 9.12 |
| CIDA | 9.14 |
| SIDA | 30.24 |



Looking Ahead

At the time of publication of this annual report, the war has ended with the LTTE being defeated on the military battlefield. The urgent needs in the country are now relief, resettlement of the displaced, reconstruction of destroyed habitations of the people, and reconciliation. NPC is convinced that none of this will be sustainable without the commitment of the government to a just political solution that addresses the roots of the ethnic conflict. With the changed circumstances in the country in mind, NPC has plans for several new programmes of work in the coming period. These include rebuilding north-south relations through people's participation in the relief and reconstruction phase and in promoting language rights that will make Sri Lanka a truly multi lingual society.

The challenge of undertaking this work will be doubled for NPC due to the illness of its General Secretary, Kingsley Rodrigo who was a source of strength in the voluntary work he did as a member of NPC's Governing Council. Using his skills as an influential intermediary between the government, civil society and NPC, Mr Rodrigo was able to assist NPC to

conduct programmes that required all round cooperation, such as the International Inter Religious Conference in Jaffna in 2007. Unfortunately, Mr Rodrigo has been unable to continue with his duties due to ill health since April 2009, and NPC's assistant secretary, Dr S H Hasbullah has taken on the role of Acting General Secretary. While looking forward to Mr Rodrigo's speedy recovery, NPC will draw upon the strengths of its Governing Council and staff to ensure that its work for a just and negotiated peace will continue.

The year 2009 presents a new set of challenges and opportunities. With the phase of conventional warfare having ended there is increasing scope to re-emphasizing the root causes of the conflict that need to be addressed. The NPC's peace education and advocacy role and its capacity building activities, undertaken over the past several years at the community level, can be usefully deployed at this juncture. In the immediate context, there is a need to deal with the humanitarian crisis caused by the displacement of people in a manner that paves the way for future peace education and advocacy work in the north and east.

Web, a tool for spreading peace messages!

NPC redesigned and revamped its Website to embrace new trends and technologies to efficiently spread its message to the worldwide audience. More than being in-vogue, NPC had a real need to effectively announce to the audience about its activities, communicate messages of peace, and describe the projects it's carrying out.

The new website of NPC was designed and implemented with all these goals in mind.

It has been re-launched with a vibrant new look, new content, significant layout updates and features a powerful and search facility of the artifacts included in the website. It also is equipped with features to upload articles with ease, publish photographs and videos of events, organize information layout with few key strokes, produce and sent out newsletters on

an automatic schedule. The built-in subscriber feature allows users to get enrolled and subscribe to newsletters automatically. Each article can be loaded with optimized keywords that will help drive website traffic and achieve greater presence.

The new website is comprised of dynamic Content Management System (CNS). The Content Management System allows easy updates and addition of material to the existing entity.

The forthcoming activities of NPC are reported on the web on a regular basis. Executive Director of NPC, Dr. Jehan Perera, features a weekly column on the site, discussing the current situation in the country. The media releases by NPC are also featured on the web. Every public event carried out by NPC are promptly reported on the web site. The address of the NPC website has remained the same throughout the revamping effort. It is <http://www.peace-srilanka.org>

