

ANNUAL REPORT



2009

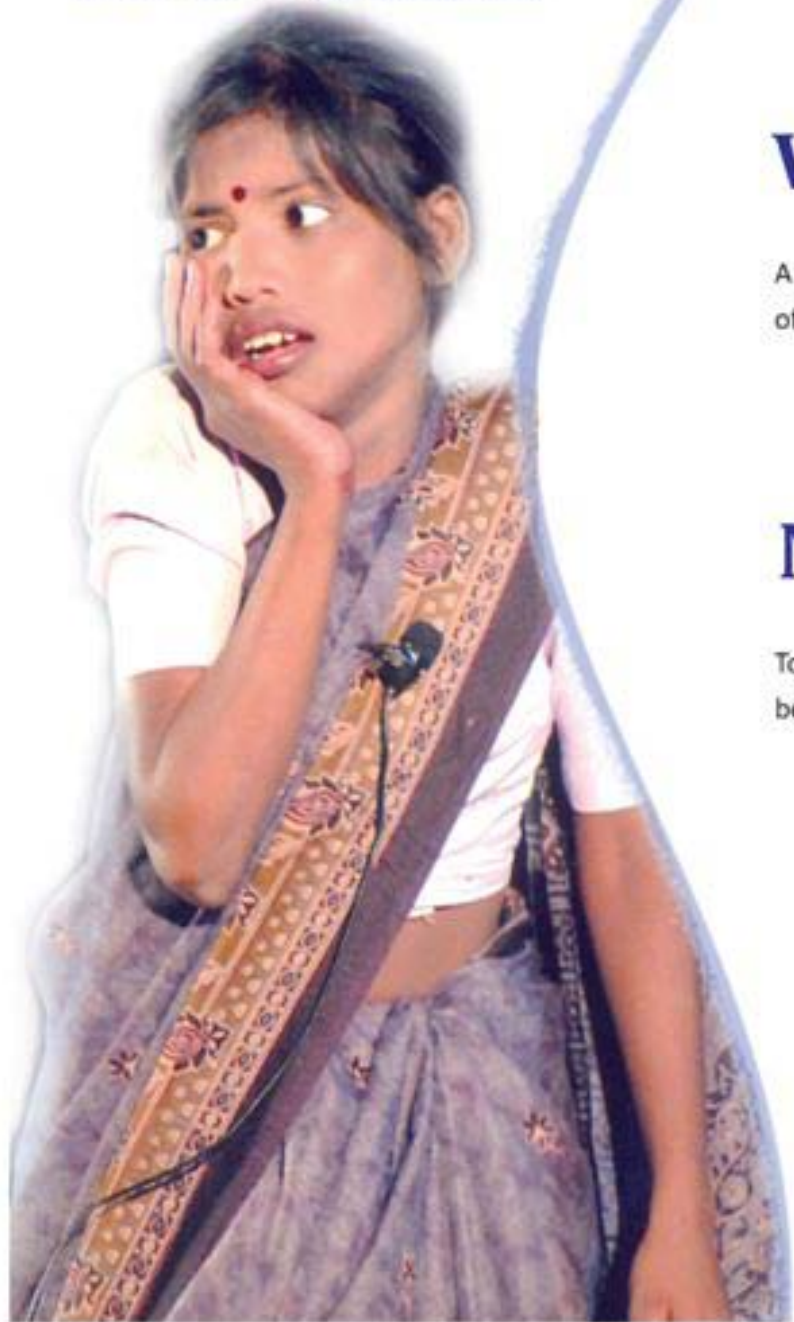
THE
NATIONAL
PEACE
COUNCIL

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THE NATIONAL
PEACE COUNCIL
OF SRI LANKA

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Vision

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

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.

About NPC

The National Peace Council (NPC) was established as an independent and impartial national non-government organization on 2 February 1995. The formation of the NPC was the culmination of a process that began with a campaign against election violence in July 1994, launched by an inter-religious group of individuals and organizations. The strategic interventions made by this group during the 1994 Presidential Election campaign specifically, and for a peaceful and permanent resolution to the protracted conflict generally, led to the organization of the first National Peace Conference the same year. The vision and mandate of the National Peace Council were formulated at this conference, leading to the establishment of the NPC the following year.

In a concerted effort to strengthen public support for a negotiated political settlement, NPC formulated its mandate to support its activities of advocacy, research, training, mobilization and dialogue, which are aimed at mobilizing the people towards peace and conflict transformation.

The road to peace and reconciliation after the war has been difficult, with many obstacles that have hampered the progress of the peace process and plunged it into crisis. The lack of a bi-partisan approach among political parties, the inadequate representation of civil society groups in resettlement and the mal-distribution of economic benefits have been the main reasons for continued ethnic polarisation. In the wake of the recent developments in the political arena, NPC has identified the need to redefine its strategy, in order to meet the needs of the changing political and social environment in Sri Lanka.





Members of Our Governing Council



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 Nesiha
Advisor - Policy and Advocacy World Vision Lanka



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 General Secretary - NPC



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



Rev. Dr. Arasa Iyaduri
(J.P. All Island) Ex-Director - Educational Service (S. L. B. C)

NPC Staff Team



From Left to Right Seated : Chrishanthi Wickramarachchi, Marlene Machado, S.P. Nathan, Jehan Perera, Regina Ramalingam, 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 Karunarathne, Thiyaga Chandana.
 Absent: M.Thiruvasahar, Wajira Thennakoon

**We are with
the people
in all the
districts
in Sri Lanka**



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Messages

01



Chairman of the Board of Directors

I am pleased to be able to present the Annual Report of the National Peace Council (NPC) for 2009. We traversed through difficult times during the year but succeeded by taking a visible stand for the basic principles of peace, democracy and human rights.

The success of all our efforts lies in the partnerships we have built with actors across the country, strengthened relationships with a number of activists, civil society groups, and government officials who share our vision for a just peace in Sri Lanka. In an environment, where peace work is fraught with difficulty or even danger and often viewed with suspicion, we value these partnerships for peace, which will be critical to our future success.

The achievements highlighted in the Annual Report would not have been possible without the unstinted support of every member of the Board of Directors, the Governing Council and staff of NPC to whom I am truly grateful.

I also wish to thank our several donors for supporting NPC financially and morally and in big and small ways because no contribution

to peace building is small.

The reporting period was marked by the end of armed hostilities, which meant an end to acts of terror, bombing and air raids and an increased feeling of safety and security in the minds of most Sri Lankans. However, this absence of violence, though welcome, does not constitute the real meaning of peace as had been promoted by NPC over the past decade and a half. The peace that we shall continue to strive for would mean the elimination of structural reasons, which led to the armed conflict, and give rise to social conditions of justice, social welfare and equity for all Sri Lankans.

I am reminded of Eleanor Roosevelt who affirmed: "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it." From this perspective, I believe there is more work for us to do in our effort to move from the current post-war phase to a permanent post-conflict one.

Joe William



General Secretary

The war that had lasted for nearly three decades finally came to an end in May 2009. The development of the country was set back by many decades. Now that the war has ended there is a great opportunity to make up for lost time. Civil society, the government and other sectors of society need to make best use of this historic opportunity to make the vision of a prosperous, peaceful and democratic Sri Lanka a reality.

During the war there was much destruction and loss of life. Post war Sri Lanka, however, faces many challenges. Today there are hundreds of thousands of victims of the war, mostly in the North and East, but also in other parts of the country. They need to be provided with various types of assistance to regain an acceptable measure of their lost lives. In addition the roots of the ethnic conflict that led to the war need to be addressed through a political solution. That effort is also continuing. Therefore issues of inter ethnic justice and equality need to be brought back from the reform agenda. Economic development can address the economic grievances of both the majority of people as well as the ethnic minorities. Multi-faceted programme of work the National Peace Council is seeking to create awareness among the people in all parts of the country. It is the great challenge of peace building after the war. In addition, as part of its global

outreach, the National Peace Council has forged international partnerships. One such relationship that I am privileged to have initiated is with the International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) founded in Paris in 1928. It is an organisation which represents national and local organisations in more than 70 countries including UN Bodies throughout the world. Membership also includes major international organizations and organisations represent tens of thousands of community organisations that work directly with people in poverty, hardship or distress. This is a network that offers opportunities for mutual learning and support. Finally, I would like to thank our partners, those who are active in our grassroots and community-level network, and others who support us nationally and internationally. We give our thanks to our donors whose finances help us to work systematically and reach many more people than we could otherwise. At the National Peace Council we have a dedicated team of volunteers, including our Governing Council members, as well as Including Exective Director and professional secretariat staff and our other staff members. Together we have been, and will continue to be, a force for a peaceful and democratic Sri Lanka in which reconciliation and justice are the twin pillars.

G. V. D. Thilakasiri



Executive Director's Message

2009 was a momentous year for Sri Lanka. It saw the end of the thirty year war in a bloody climax. NPC had strived for an end to the war since its inception in 1995. But NPC's goal had been peace through a just political solution, without war. Even as the war raged, NPC continuously called for political negotiations and reform.

After the war's end, NPC's mission remains to contribute to a just political solution in Sri Lanka. This task continues to be challenging. Mainstream opinion, which is molded by the government and mass media, holds to the view that the end of the war has brought peace. There is complacency in society about a natural end to the ethnic conflict.

The post-war environment has posed its challenges to NPC's educational, mobilization and advocacy-oriented work. Those who believe that peace has dawned,

see no need for organizations such as NPC to exist and suspect that its continued existence has some ulterior motive. On the other hand, due to the easing of security restrictions, there is less fear in civil society of falling foul of killer squads and the North and East is open to travel.

NPC has identified the continued resistance to devolution-based political solutions to the ethnic conflict as being the basic obstacle to sustainable peace. After the military defeat of the separatist LTTE, the voice for devolution of power has become irrelevant if not politically discredited. The devolution of power has few political champions at this time. Accordingly as a committed civil society organization NPC will continue to expand our peace education programmes which emphasise the sharing of political power between the ethnic communities as key to sustainable peace.

Jehan Perera



Chief Operations Executive

Working for Peace in a Challenging environment!

Although 2009 was a turbulent year for civil society activists and peace workers, the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC) continued to take a visible stand for the basic principles of peace, democracy and human rights. We urged negotiation and respect for human life while the war raged in the North & East, and pressed for the quick release of civilians being detained in IDP camps. Recognizing the need for multi-level activism, we also strengthened our island-wide activities among Track II and Track III. Through our trainings, workshops, conferences and public discussions, we consistently raised awareness on topics such as good governance, power-sharing, pluralism, IDP rights and other essential issues that remain pertinent to peace building today.

The key foundations of our work are peace education, mobilization, and advocacy. Most of our activities targeted Track II leaders, who have the capacity to influence their communities towards peace, while also

persuading greater policy oriented approaches to peace in their Track I networks. Thus, NPC conducted a number of awareness workshops aimed at Track II leaders, in topics ranging from human rights to constitutional reform. Also of note are our pluralism workshops among Track II leaders. Developing the themes of 2008's pluralism activities, 2009 saw a series of workshops conducted at the district level to encourage a pluralistic lifestyle among community leaders.

Specialized workshops were also conducted among areas with large Muslim populations to discuss the spiritual aspects of pluralism, and to promote community cohesion based on pluralistic values. The workshops led to the growth of voluntary Pluralism Action Committees, which resolved to promote pluralistic practice among their home communities and within local government.

The practice of pluralism has been an



underlying theme of much of our peace-building work. With the past decades tainted by ethnic segregation, discrimination and violence, it is important to revisit the concepts of pluralistic living among our diverse society. Many of our activities for 2009 thus centred on bringing together citizens from Sri Lanka's rich array of ethnic and religious groups to encourage reconciliation. After many years of segregation, North-South interaction will be key to peace-building in the time to come. While political agendas remain a pervasive influence on public information, individual journalists and some media corporations retain a continuing interest in promoting peace. 2009 thus saw NPC train journalists in conflict sensitive reporting and raising awareness on peace, pluralism, and power-sharing among media personnel.

NPC has also increased debate on topics of federalism, pluralism, human rights, IDPs, and other critical topics among target groups through its media releases, the weekly columns of Executive Director Jehan Perera, and its independent newspaper, Thulava. We hope our publications, which include a pluralism module, a Tamil language module, and two compilations on the APRC and the 17th Amendment respectively, will also serve to further public knowledge on issues critical to peace-building in the post-war era.

The success of all our efforts lies in the partnerships we

have built with actors across the country. During this year, we thus invested in strengthening relationships with a number of activists, civil society groups, and government officials who share our vision for a just peace in Sri Lanka. We created a database of 361 peace activists from 18 districts who we aim to engage in our future work. Additionally, we began reviving ties with networks from our past projects to mobilize a national coalition for peace. In this environment, where peace work is fraught with difficulty or even danger, we believe that building strong partnerships for peace will be critical to our future success.

These activities have been the highlights of our work in 2009. Although the year presented many challenges, we have continued with our commitment to work for a peaceful and prosperous land. Through our activities we encouraged debate, cooperation and introspection among a wide range of actors; we rallied civil society actors to lobby for power-sharing; and we facilitated productive partnerships between men and women of diverse ethnic and religious groups. During a year clouded by increasing authoritarianism, we also strived to uphold the spirit of dissent. We hope that the work that we have done, and will continue to do in the upcoming year, will serve to empower a committed, active movement for peace, equality and political change.

Regina Ramalingam



The youth

camp

in Galle -

"A Peace Bridge!"



Strategizing NPCs Efforts

02

Strategizing NPCs Efforts: 2008 - 2010

To ensure a meaningful provision of core NPC services to its intended target groups, five strategies for organizational development have been prioritized that are expected to enhance the effectiveness of the organization in the years 2008 - 2010. These include the following:

1. Diversify tools to reach mass audiences through its Track II partners.
2. Reconfirm promising new intermediary (Track II) target groups and develop capacity to target them with practical peace building projects in strategic alliance with selected national peace agents.
3. Enhance the quality of peace building efforts with community leaders and CBOs, in particular by establishing working relations that are:
 - o Long lasting
 - o Diverse and interactive
 - o Tailor made
 - o Target selected influential members from communities
 - o Inclusive of interpersonal and conflict sensitivity efforts.
14. Improve insight in the extent to which intended short-term results (changed understanding and awareness) and long term impact (changed pro-peace behaviour) is achieved.
5. Enhance visibility / international profile of NPC through intensifying working relationship with like minded organizations outside Sri Lanka



**Basic
Human
need is
basic
Human
Rights**

A playlet enacted
by the children
from Jaffna

Achievements and Activities

03

Knowledge and skills of different stakeholders on non-violence and peace increased

Increased knowledge and skills in different stakeholders on non-violence and peace, was a central aspect of NPC's activities for 2009. Capacity of staff and partners improved to achieve NPC's objectives, is included within this report, as NPC is itself a stakeholder in achieving a just peace and reconciliation. As such, the increase of knowledge and skills is equally necessary for the NPC staff.

NPC conducted the following activities to enhance the awareness and ability of targeted groups to promote peace:

Development of peace educational modules and materials for different target groups

Availability of peace education training modules and educational materials is an important pre-requisite of any meaningful awareness raising or peace education training programs. NPC thus planned to develop and print following peace educational modules and materials in 2009: Pluralism Module, Conflict Resolution Module, Tamil Language teaching module; a book on the All Party Representative Committee, and a book on "A Time Line of Significant Events of the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka".





Pluralism Module - Pluralism workshops conducted by the NPC during 2008 and 2009 in 10 districts have produced double results. Through energetically engaging in these workshops, participants in 10 districts were able to understand and appreciate the values of pluralism within their communities and districts. This facilitated NPC to produce the module on Pluralism.

250 copies of the Module have been printed in all three languages and this was launched at the national consultation held in Colombo at the BMICH with the participation of all the participants who had energetically engaged in its development.

It is expected that the module would act as a facilitator to maximize participants' active participation and engagement in the workshops planned to continue in 2010.

The facilitators will use the module in the future as a guide to educate and engage with workshop participants to put into practice the values of pluralism.

Conflict Resolution Module - The Conflict Resolution Module has been developed by the NPC to assist facilitators prepare for and conduct the planned Conflict Resolution workshops for youth. The module contains suggested timelines and ideas for the workshop. The module aims to increase the techniques for improving conflict resolution and communication skills, promote the understanding of conflict and the ability to deal with conflicts effectively and constructively, and to help participants to build a harmonious environment within the community and society.

At present, the final draft of the module is being edited prior to publication.

Tamil Language Teaching Module - The Tamil Language Teaching Module has been developed with the objective of guiding/facilitating the language teachers to effectively teach the Tamil language. This module is expected to assist in streamlining NPC's Tamil Language classes, and will allow a more consistent evaluation.

It is expected that all Tamil language teachers who use this module will demonstrate their ability to provide efficient language instruction to Sinhala adult participants, and will also improve their capacity to incorporate peace messages in their instructional delivery. It is hoped that participating language students will be able to use their second language skills to interact with members of other communities.

250 copies of language modules will be printed and distributed among language teachers.



Book on All Party Representative Committee (APRC)

This book has been produced with the objectives of improving the understanding and increasing the awareness of the APRC within Sri Lankan civil society, as a part of NPC's efforts to facilitate a peaceful, sustainable solution to the conflict. Since civil society plays an instrumental role in raising awareness on the issue of political and ethnic crisis, the publishing of this book will be beneficial in stimulating dialogue among participants.

The book includes all the consensus-agreements issued related to the ethnic issue from the 1815 Udarata Givisuma to the speech made by President Mahinda Rajapaksha on 19th May 2009. Proposals submitted by political parties and NGOs are also included in this book.

NPC expects that knowledge and awareness of the APRC proposals within civil society will be increased as a result of this book. It also hopes that this book will function as a key resource in the discussion and dialogue of the conflict. The book will be largely utilized by the increased number of students of Peace Studies in universities.

Book on "A Timeline of Significant Events of the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka"

A book on "A Timeline of Significant Events of the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka" attempts to trace the root causes of the conflict. It offers a comprehensive review of the conflict, including both prominent stories, as well as lesser-known aspects of Sri Lanka's past.

The book has been developed along a timeline: beginning with the election of Sir. Ponnambalam Ramanathan to the Legislative Council in 1911 by the educated Ceylonese this book discusses events up to the current situation. It includes not only very prominent political, economic and social events that have been root causes of the ethnic conflict, but also simple stories which signify how the main ethnic groups lived together harmoniously in the past. It includes descriptions of the great personalities, wealth and resources the country lost due to ethnic strife. The historical portrayal and thorough analysis of the development of the conflict provides a comprehensive and accessible text for the reader to understand not only individual events but also how they relate to one another.

Conducting national and district level peace education programs for different target group

Conflict Resolution workshops for Youth

NPC conducted training sessions on "Pluralism: Understanding Differences". Each program was attended by approximately 20 female and male youth, and they acquired satisfactory knowledge on both issues.

Second Language Teaching (Tamil language classes)



In 2008, several District Action Committee (DAC) members made requests to NPC to conduct second language classes for needy communities in their respective areas. Previous experiences with second language during the Prabodhini program (2005 –2007) proved that it is a very successful strategy to improve inter-ethnic relationships among the students of different communities, as well as among the parents of students attending the classes. According to the new language policy implemented by the government, a qualification in both national languages is compulsory for those who seek employment or promotion in the government service. As a result, there is growing demand for learning a second language, especially Tamil, from the majority Sinhala-speaking people throughout the country.

In view of this, NPC designed and conducted Tamil language classes for selected youth/adult groups (two groups) in 10 districts. The focus of this project was on teaching second languages, which would bring about positive results in the area of Peace Education. The main objectives of this project were to improve the comprehension and communication skills in Tamil of the adult learners and to promote

communication and interaction among different ethnic communities. The 6-month course was conducted in 13 locations in 9 districts with examinations held in November 2009.

Impact

Around 280 learners are now able to initiate basic dialogue in Tamil in day-to-day life. Some of the learners are very enthusiastic and have sent letters to the NPC requesting that classes are continued in the coming year.



Communication and interaction among different ethnic communities within targeted areas have improved since the commencement of classes. A cordial environment has also been created among the students and language teachers, and also with the NPC. Some of the language teachers also lent their services to the youth camp held in Galle, with some serving as interpreters at the sessions conducted in the youth camp.

Workshop on Power sharing and Federalism

The objectives of the one-day workshop on "Power Sharing and Federalism" were to enhance knowledge of the NPC staff members on the history of conflict, political history of Sri Lanka, Power Sharing and Federalism and to empower them to perform their roles as peace builders effectively.

The enhanced confidence of NPC staff following this training, has empowered some of the staff members to function as facilitators/trainers in power-sharing workshops conducted for community-based organizations.

TOT on Good Governance, HR and Capacity Building (SLFI)

On 24-25th June, the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute conducted a two-day Training of Trainers workshop on good governance, human rights and capacity building which two NPC staff attended. The training was able to expand their knowledge and skills and build capacity for quality improvement, while also learning to train others.



Teaching Tamil to Non-Tamil speaking staff at NPC

Recognizing the need for bilingualism among NPC staff, a 24-class course in Tamil for Sinhala speakers commenced in July. Rev. Iyadurai, a member of the Governing Council and experienced second language teacher, conducted the program. An examination held at the end of the course revealed that 16 staff members had gained basic fluency in Tamil (verbal and spoken) as a direct result of their participation.

It is hoped that this knowledge will improve the staff's comprehension and communication skills, and enhance their ability to interact with stakeholders and participants from the Tamil community.



Democratic Leadership Training/Exposure

NPC undertook two sub-activities to expose NPC members to international democratic leadership:-

Exposure visit to Japan

18th-24th February 2009, the team leader of the Rights and Reforms Team participated in the "Peace Promotion Tour in Japan", along with a group of representatives from the government sector. The South West Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, organized the tour specifically for government representatives from the war-affected districts in the Eastern province. The objective of this tour was to ensure mutual understanding and enhance friendship between war-affected people in both countries.



TOPs, Peace & Security Training, Sweden

The Executive National Coordinator of the NPC attended the Global Program on Peace & Security (TOPs) held in Sweden, from 5-15th May. This program was conducted by Uppsala University in Sweden in co-operation with the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in South Africa, and was attended by 25 participants from nine conflict-stricken countries. The program aimed to provide a high level exchange of insights generated through academia and research, and to convey an understanding of the challenges faced by regional and international organizations working with the resolution and management of conflict, post-conflict assistance, and conflict prevention. The program also updated participants on recent findings in peace research, and trained participants in tools for analyzing conflict situations. This forum also allowed participants to share insights with other professionals in their field. The Executive National Coordinator successfully completed the training and will conduct a presentation on the program to share this knowledge and experience with staff.

Workshop on Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation



A three-day workshop on Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation was conducted for 14 members of the NPC staff with the objectives of providing knowledge, techniques and tools for conducting their own planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Mr. L.M. Williams, Former Executive Director of MDF South Asia was the primary trainer at the workshop. The workshop also featured additional presentations, group working sessions and an evaluation on the groups' outcomes.

Through this training program NPC program staff learned to develop action plans: identify input, activities, and outputs, develop SMART objectives, indicators, risk indicators and assumptions, to manage budgeting and, reporting without depending on specific individuals. The quality of their performances increased dramatically as a direct result of the capacity development trainings and some have consequently developed their skills to perform as resource persons.

Peace Education Promoted through Media

The importance and relevance of creating awareness among journalists on peace education is beyond argument. The social influence commanded by the media also means that any meaningful awareness raising exercise cannot be effective in today's political environment without the support of journalists. Raising awareness of journalists on human sensitive methods of reporting and photography was considered a significant and productive step towards changing attitudes and increasing the knowledge and skills of various stakeholders on non-violent peace education. Therefore, two training programmes were conducted for provincial journalists in the Trincomalee district and in the Anuradhapura district in 2009.



Conducting Conflict sensitive reporting for provincial journalist

On 7th March, two workshops were held for provincial journalists to educate them in conflict sensitive reporting.

Workshop on Conflict Sensitive Reporting for Provincial Journalists in Trincomalee

A group of 25 provincial journalists, representing all three communities- 4 Tamil, 4 Sinhala and 17 Muslim - attended the first training held in May 2009. The program was a lively and inspiring one in which all the participants had an opportunity to get acquainted with the issues, especially with conflict sensitive photography in terms of multi-cultural, multi-religious and gender issues. Wilson Gnanadasa (Senior journalist - The Nation newspaper), Mr. S.M.Surendran (Senior Photo Journalist – Daily Virakesari) and Mr. Eranga Jayawardena (Photo Journalist - Associated Press) were the facilitators at this workshop.

The objectives of conducting this workshop were to train journalists in conflict sensitive skills in media reporting (to teach them how to go beyond fact-deliverers position), conflict sensitive photography, to change the attitude and behaviors that lead to negative/destructive ways of reporting, and to empower them to use their individual strengths and resources for transforming attitudes in their environment.



Following -up program with journalists

The second workshop was attended by 20 participants, representing all three ethnic groups (3 Sinhala, 2 Tamil and 15 Muslim journalists). Resource persons conducting the sessions were Mr. A.M.N. Nilam (Chief Reporter - Thinakural and Editor - Eastern Edition) and Mr.Suranimala Perera (Chief Photo Editor - Lakbima Newspaper), who are well known experts in the media field, and the NPC appreciates their contribution, having traveled to Trincomalee from Colombo specifically.

Outcome

The workshop was evaluated by a post-evaluation of knowledge and attitudes. The participants' ratings of the training show their satisfaction with the degree to which the objectives were met. The journalists expressed an improvement in their knowledge and skills through their quality of work. An additional result of the workshops was the formation of a group of journalists, who are willing to participate in future NPC activities in the Trincomalee district.



Increasing Civil Society's Participation in Peace-Related Efforts!

Increasing civil society's participation in peace-related efforts, is central to achieving broad public support for peace. NPC undertook the following activities to encourage a national civil society movement for peace:

Raising awareness among target groups about the causes and effects of Sri Lanka's conflict (including language rights, IDP camps, Human Rights violations etc.), as well as possible solutions.

Conduct entry point activities with target groups to engage with their societies

Through engagement with different stakeholders, including university students, civil society leaders, youth, government servants and religious leaders, this activity aimed to achieve the following:

- i) Increase knowledge on power-sharing
- ii) Improve interest through attitudinal change to apply the principles of pluralism in their communities or associations
- iii) Improve willingness to encourage the application of pluralistic values to policy decisions
- iv) Create and/or strengthen networking among target groups
- v) Build capacity of target groups to engage in peace building activities at the local level.

Lectures by high-profile figures to university students

35 students representing all three communities from the University of Colombo (Art, Law, Management Faculties), and the University of Jayawardenapura (Art Faculty) attended this workshop. Lectures were delivered by prominent resource persons such as Mr. Shiral Lakthilaka, Attorney-at-Law, and Dr. Sasanka Perera, Senior Lecture of the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo.

Training to function as implementing agents of peace activities at local level Managerial training for a group of 29 members was conducted with the objectives of improving their capacity as excellent activity executors at the district level. It is hoped that they will aid the work of NPC through effective and efficient performance in different activities with proper project maintenance, monitoring and controlling, and effective evaluation. District Action Committee (DAC) leaders & members, community leaders and other local NGO leaders attended this training program.

Conducting Shramadana by multiethnic groups to renovate public places



With the intention of promoting harmonious community living among all ethnic groups in a Tamil village in Galle a Shramadana campaign was organized by NPC in collaboration with the DAC leaders in Galle. During this event, civil society groups renovated the Tamil school in the Divathura Watte estate with the assistance of all communities in the area, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. Children of the Tamil school also painted drawings on the theme of peace and reconciliation on the parapet wall around the school. At the end of the shramadana the children had a get-together and performed multi-cultural events. Adults expressed their views on peace and reconciliation, and the importance of living in unity and harmony with neighbors.

As a result of this activity, a better and pleasant environment was created for school children and teachers. It strengthened the relationship of multi- ethnic community leaders in the area and promoted unity and mutual relationship among communities. The painting outside the parapet wall of the school will also have a lasting impact on the community as it allows all those who view it to understand the views of children on "peace and harmony for co-habitation".

Inter-ethnic Fellowship Youth Camp in Galle - the Future is in our hands!



NPC organized and implemented a youth camp in a southern city, Galle, where multi ethnic youth groups were brought together to share experiences from their own communities. The objectives of this effort were to build mutual understanding and build relationships among youth from 15 districts, including war-affected districts in the North, Northeastern and the Eastern Provinces. 150 youth attended this great event and had excellent experiences living with multiethnic youth from different ethnic communities from different backgrounds. The events that took place over this three-day camp included group discussions and workshops on Power Sharing, Pluralism, Gender, Good governance, and Human Rights; leadership training to build up team leadership; and traditional games and cultural events.

Inter-ethnic New Year celebrations with DAC leaders

A program was conducted to celebrate the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in Hatton, a main city in the plantation sector of the Central Province, by bringing different communities together. The objective of this venture was to promote a friendly environment through an attitudinal change among the people of the area, and to create awareness of the importance of inter-community interaction for peace and harmony. More than 500 people from all walks of life participated in this celebration, including Sinhala and Tamil villagers and plantation workers, DAC leaders and members, community leaders, local politicians, businessmen, police, and government officials. Through the inter-ethnic interaction fostered through this celebration, participants were encouraged to reevaluate any suspicions they may have

about other groups. The group celebration and mutual cooperation witnessed at this event will also promote greater harmony in the area. Furthermore, the relationships between DAC members were strengthened, and more networks were created between DAC members and activists of local like-minded organizations.



Inter-religious dialogue based on spiritual teachings on conflict resolution

To bring about an attitudinal change and promote harmonious living, a dialogue based on the doctrines of great religions was initiated among Ratnapura's community leaders. This was led by 55 outstanding Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslim community and religious leaders who could play a decisive role in resolving issues among their communities.

This dialogue created awareness among participants of equal rights and opportunities for all ethnic groups based on religious doctrine in a democratic society. Those who participated will be able to carry this message to the grassroots level. It is hoped that the empathy and mutual understanding promoted at this event will affect positive interactions among the multi-ethnic, multi-religious communities in the area.



Conduct a Survey to Determine Support for a Political Solution to the Conflict

Although initially three sub-activities were planned for this activity, the unfavorable political environment and the advancement of the Presidential elections meant that two of these sub-activities had to be postponed to 2010. In 2009, therefore, the following were undertaken:

Community Meetings and Situation Analysis

To achieve a comprehensive situation analysis, discussions were organized with local constituencies with the assistance of DAC leaders, and the ensuing data collected and collated. Two one day workshops were held in Kurunegala and Galle with the participation of 52 community

representatives, who are already involved with the peace activities of the National Peace Council from 14 districts (Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Kalutara, Colombo, Rathnapura, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Gampaha, Ampara, Nuwara-Eliya, Kurunagala, Kandy, Badulla and Kegalle).

The objectives of this activity were to make the participants understand the factors that have led to the disruption of peace among families and society, to develop a broad realization of the issues that disrupt peace, and to find solutions and alternative proposals that can be applied in such situations. These discussions also aimed to develop civil society capacity to plan and implement peace activities that could help them realize a sustainable peace. At the end of the event, areas that participate submitted proposals to the NPC that outlined how they hope to achieve peace in their communities.

Mass Events



To celebrate International Peace Day a mass demonstration was organized in Jaffna. This program was organized by NPC in collaboration with the Center for Peace and Reconciliation, of Jaffna. A group of 19 people including NPC representatives, and more than 300 participants including religious, government and community leaders attended the program which was held in a field in the village of Kaitadi.

Young Tamil boys and girls performed traditional cultural events during this event. This program facilitated dialogue with religious leaders, government officers and university lecturers. This also saw Southern participants meet with war widows to listen to their grievances and understand the grave situation they face on a daily basis. A meeting was also held with women community leaders to understand the situation in Jaffna after the war, and to discuss possible activities that could serve to assist them.

As a result of this activity, NPC and Southern leaders were able to gain a firsthand contextual understanding of the living conditions of their fellow

Non-violent resistance capacity building training for university students and other target groups and the sub activity

Residential workshop on peace building through NVCR to university students selected community leaders in 10 districts. A two-day residential workshop was conducted in Colombo with attendance from 29 participants from 12 districts representing NGO and CBO leaders, local government politicians, university students, youth, and government officials. The objectives of this workshop were to help participants



- understand the emotional, intellectual and physical components of violence
- understand issues related to power and gender and their impact on conflict resolution;
- develop knowledge on constructive, creative alternatives to solve problems without violence
- develop better relationships based on a process of peaceful change in individual and social life
- develop interest in promoting dialogue and reconciliation across social divides to create a sustainable peace.

Following this workshop, some participants were able to mediate in conflict situations among their community and bring peaceful solutions to those issues. They have sent reports of such interventions to NPC.

Building Peace by Promoting Pluralism Values among Track2 Actors!

September 2008 - October 2009

Sri Lanka is a microcosm of ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity where three main ethnic groups; the Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims, speak three major languages; Sinhala, Tamil and English and perform four major religions; Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity concurrently.

The Regional Conference on Pluralism in South Asia held in Colombo on the 24/25th of March 2008 highlighted the importance of minority involvement in the political process to promote negotiations for peace. 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.

The introduction of the Pluralism project by NPC in June 2008 was the culmination of the above indicated National Conference held in Sri Lanka with the participation of six south Asian countries and the Canadian elite groups, in Colombo.

The strategy of NPC was to work with Track 2 level participants to:

- Lead a "Sri Lanka-specific community of practice" with Sri Lankan civil society and business organizations in support of pluralism and minority rights

These Track 2 workshops were held in district-level centers of diversity in Sri Lanka. The locations were Ampara, Trincomalee, Puttalam, Galle, Matara, Ratnapura, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Kurunegala and Colombo. These locations contain combinations of large numbers of different ethnic communities, viz Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Estate Tamils. The workshops created awareness among the participants on the historical aspect of pluralism, the importance of active engagement with diversity that is necessary for coexistence, and to adhere to democratic principles.

At these workshops, Resource Persons made presentations on the five values of pluralism drawn out from the earlier held Regional Conference. The presentations were followed with questions and discussions on the problems encountered in the areas concerned and suggested solutions to foster pluralism.

Outcome/ Results

- The presentation on promotion of “Pluralistic values” at each of the above workshops promoted very lively discussions and contributions by participants, who proposed a series of remedial measures to counteract the present ethnic crisis and make pluralism a living reality.
- The request by participants at the workshops to conduct more programs on Pluralism to enhance their knowledge is an indication of the growing enthusiasm about the concept.
- Participants in their evaluations expressed that they would be able to utilize the knowledge gained to promote pluralism at community level and in their places of work, thus promoting space for expansion.



Specific proposals made by the participants to promote pluralism

- i. Necessity to organize language classes in Sinhalese and Tamil and to teach the same in all schools. This is a very important step towards promoting a close dialogue among all ethnic groups. The idea should be brought to the attention of the relevant State officials.
- ii. To create awareness and pressurize state sector organizations of the necessity to implement the language policy.
- iii. Non implementation of the language policy. Even though there is a policy to have communication available in both Tamil and Sinhala languages, this policy is not seen as adequately implemented. This is one cause for the lack of smooth communication between ethnic communities. The participants urged to take action to create awareness among relevant authorities to implement the language policy.
- iv. The presence of armed Paramilitary groups. This hinders peace in the North and East. The need to pressurize the government to disarm different political activists that have become an immense problem to the civil society was expressed as an opinion.

The Pluralism National Conference 12th October 2009 at the BMICH in Colombo

After ten months of intensive educative program created awareness on historical evidence of Pluralism and on energetic engagement with diversity to 366 participants. The aim was to facilitate a form of cultural appreciation that encouraged more than just toleration; to create a space to truly understand the beauty of diversity throughout the island. The National Conference held with 180 representatives from various Districts and disciplines on 12th October was the final stage of the pluralism workshop and the efforts were finally reaped with the formulation of a National Pluralism Committee made up of the regional representatives.

The Conference was chaired by the Chairperson of the National Peace Council Mr. Joe William and the Chief Guest was His Excellency Fred Jacques of the Canadian High commission. The Guests of Honor were Ms. Vigdis Wathne First Secretary of the Norwegian Embassy and Mr Nawaz Mohamad program officer of the Swedish Embassy. Foreign dignitaries, University academics, NGOs, media representatives, religious leaders and other Track 2 level representatives of the 10 districts were in attendance. One hundred and eighty people came together to discuss peace building by accommodating and celebrating diversity. This event brought together the key representatives from the different communities engaged in the pluralism workshops that had taken place over the last ten months.

Important issues highlighted at the Conference

- The importance of enforcing the rule of law throughout the country was emphasized.
- The language barriers that exist have also played a significant role in hindering the pluralism process; a large majority of the speakers flagged this as a key issue with particular reference to access limitations.
- Many people were not registered at birth leading to a limited capacity of movement. With no birth certificate it is almost impossible to register for a National Identity Card, which is required to travel and people are arrested at checkpoints if they fail to carry their identity card.
- Social mobility, especially amongst those from the plantation sector, is non-existent; the percentage of children from this region who will secure a place in University or a government job is almost unheard of.



The "Advocates"

in Action

CAFOD - NPC

Collaboration





Power sharing - the means to Sustainable Peace in Sri Lanka! CAFOD-NPC Collaboration!

Building a People's Movement for Power Sharing, the first intervention between CAFOD and NPC continued for a period of 20 months from 1st June 2007 and selected personnel were trained to be 'Resource Persons' on Power sharing and they educated more than 1500-2000 men and women for the same cause.

The highlight of the project was the handing over of a 'Manifesto' for power sharing to the Chairman of the APRC and the then Minister of Science & Technology Prof. Tissa Vitharana at the National conference held in Colombo. This stood as a testimony to the commitment of the participants towards power sharing and to their ability in reaching out to different levels of policy makers.

The 2nd phase, 'Building Peace through Power sharing' a roll out project started in APRIL 2009, was more focused on capitalizing on the effect created by the first phase to create a strong base of advocates for power sharing from among the leaders of the civil society. The 24 'Resource Persons' were proposed to independently take more responsibilities to encourage community leaders to take the message of power sharing across to their communities using different strategies like using any platform for such purpose.

The reaching out was made possible and broad based with the publishing of the News Bulletin 'Thulawa' and the attempt to network with like minded organizations.

Though the situation changed from the time the project started, the outcomes of the project have been well achieved which is evident through the indicators.

Achievements

The resource personnel are committed to power sharing initiatives and are ably handling public programmes; Able to influence the community members on the need for power sharing striking comparison to the Indian Panchayat system; Created awareness

among the community on the existing provincial council system and the hindrance for power sharing in the same; writing articles and able to interview politicians on power sharing; Have been resource persons on power sharing for workshops presently started in the North. The first workshop was conducted in Mannar and Mr. Safeel was one of the resource persons;

Being invited by the government authorities to be resource persons on issues including gender; have done an opinion survey on power sharing among different groups in Jaffna; participating and contributing in all the activities of NPC - have done a situational analysis and presented it to other NGOs; Are actively involved as action committee members to promote values of pluralism among the constituencies.

The panel discussions proved their efficiency to debate a subject which is controversial and one that needs appropriate information and knowledge to share with others. We have also seen leadership emerging from the community and it has the potential of bringing forth political aspirations among the resource persons especially among the few women members.

The need to create the space for understanding the views of the minority groups and educating on the provincial council system as a panacea for the ethnic crisis is less understood by the public and among the provincial council members.

Hence the National Peace Council will involve the resource persons and the community groups to educate the relevant groups to educate and form a platform in the South and the North and East, to voice for power sharing in a pragmatic sense.

Dialogue! A Positive Means for Conflict Resolution!

In an effort to promote positive dialogue between aggrieved parties in conflict, NPC undertook a series of seminars, public discussions and events to raise awareness on issues relevant to the conflict. Additionally, NPC also functioned as a source of analysis to a number of international institutions, which are involved in peace-building and conflict resolution in Sri Lanka.

In-house Seminars

In 2009, NPC conducted two seminars on critical topics that were pertinent to major issues of the time. These seminars were based on research conducted by NPC with the support of students interning at the organization. The discussions sparked by this research involved a diverse range of actors, such as civil society leaders and members of the military, allowing rigorous debate and greater public interest.

Conflict Transformation Practices that Offer Hope to Sri Lanka: Lessons Learned from Other Countries.

This seminar reviewed conflict transformation mechanisms that have proved successful in other countries, and which may provide hope for resolving conflict in Sri Lanka. The history of conflict in seven countries (Sierra Leone, Cyprus, Sudan, Northern Ireland, Bangladesh, Philippines and Aceh) and their process of conflict transformation were described. The seminar was followed by a brainstorming session on how such lessons can be applied in Sri Lanka. 20 representatives from 10 organizations participated in this discussion.

Seminar on Counter-Insurgency, Military Warfare, and Conflict Transformation

This seminar explored the social, economic and political impacts of three counter-insurgency strategies (Boer War, Punjab and Chechnya) that were dominated by political strength. It also looked in detail at the various tactics used in counter-insurgency operations, and how they have a direct effect on the degree to which a civilian population will support militants. Through these case studies, it found that the only way to guarantee peace was through a negotiated political solution that addressed the needs of affected populations. The seminar was followed by a discussion on the opportunities for political dialogue in Sri Lanka. 28 representatives from 18 organizations participated in this program.



Public Forums



IDPs in the North Opportunities and Challenges

This public seminar explored the history of displacement in Sri Lanka due to war, and investigated the movement of the people, their confinement, relocation, and efforts made to provide for them and restore normalcy.

Property, Raciality and Reconciliation

Post-war Sri Lanka faces historic opportunity for political and economic progress. However, it also faces formidable challenges of resettlement of its displaced population, and reconciliation. Dr. Stewart Motha of the University of Kent led a discussion on liberalism and the politics of recognition, constitutionalism, vertical and horizontal logics, sovereignty and the problem of the "political", as related to the complexities of the South African, Australian and Sri Lankan political, legal and social contexts. Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne and Mr. Joe William commented on Dr. Motha's presentation based on their observations and experiences with Sri Lankan reality.



Non Devolutionary Constitutional Reforms: An Alternative or Supplement to Devolution?

The devolution of power to the provinces has often been debated as permanent solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. This is a political reform, which the Tamil polity has often called for, since it would address issues of discrimination and permit a measure of self-governance for minority groups. Despite its promises, devolution remains a highly contentious subject, especially in today's post-war period. This seminar thus examined alternative ways of achieving equality for all sections of society, and additional measures of social and political reform that would be necessary to supplement devolution. Hon. Karu Jayasuriya, Hon. R. Sampanthan, Mr. Rohan Edirisinhe and other prominent members of the political and civil society leadership spoke at the seminar.

Brainstorming Seminar: Widening the Space for Civil Society

Although the end of the war opened up space for political dialogue

and reconciliation, civil society groups which speak for peace, power-sharing, IDP rights and other crucial topics are often widely criticized and find it difficult to operate. Convening noted civil society leaders, this seminar explored the constructive actions that civil society groups and NGOs can undertake in the three areas of political reform, humanitarian assistance and international awareness to widen their scope for constructive engagement with the government during this time.

Public Peace Events

North-South reconciliation has become a prominent need in peace-building in post-war Sri Lanka. Thus, NPC has organized a number of events that promote relationships across the North-South divide. The most successful of these has been a visit of Northern children to Colombo, which allowed friendly interactions between children that crossed ethnic, religious, linguistic and class divides (please see Result 5 for a more comprehensive description of this program).

Raising International Awareness on Peace in Sri Lanka

In addition to its local peace-building work, NPC collaborates with a number of international institutions that desire to promote peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The Executive Director, Jehan Perera has been invited by the U.S. State Department, the Royal Defense Academy, and other prominent international institutions to share his analyses in the evolving political situation in Sri Lanka. His opinion is also consistently sought by diplomatic missions, both locally and abroad. The Chief Operations Executive, Regina Ramalingam, was also invited to contribute her experiences to the international Peace Symposium organized by the Asia Rural Institute of Japan.

Understanding Peace-Oriented Constitutional Reforms!

Improving target group understanding of peace-oriented constitutional reform, is important to ensure the political changes that must take place to secure peace. NPC undertook the following strategies to achieve this outcome:

Creating awareness on the 13th and 17th Amendments among Track II participants



Workshops on 13th and 17th Amendments

To contribute to good governance and respect for human rights in Sri Lanka, NPC embarked on a series of workshops to enhance knowledge on the 13th and 17th Amendments, which would result in encouraging public pressure for their speedy implementation. The 13th and 17th Amendments are the two topics most often debated in Parliament and discussed by the public. This prevailing condition and mood in the country led NPC to take up the topic.

NPC conducted two workshops on the 13th and 17th Amendment in Trincomalee and Ratnapura for Track II participants. The Ratnapura workshop was conducted at the request of participants in the Pluralism consultative conference held at the BMICH. A strong request was made as a result of group discussions that NPC should conduct an awareness rising programs on such reforms.

The participants were from diverse groups representing all communities and religions, consisted of religious and political leaders, NGO representatives, Government officials, Women organizations etc. There were 34 participants participating in the Trincomalee workshop and 54 participants in the Ratnapura workshop.

By inviting higher government officials and the other track two level participants to attend, NPC was also able to strengthen its network of support in the Trincomalee and Ratnapura areas. Many of the participants seemed eager to be further involved with NPC, which will be an asset when organizing future programs. NPC was also able to discuss new initiatives with representatives from the Education Ministry.

Output of the Workshops

- Evaluation shows more than 90% of the participants had an increased awareness on 13th and 17th Amendment
- Greater dialogue about the 13th and 17th Amendment was generated among the target group
- Built and strengthened the partnership of Track II level people of Trincomalee district and Ratnapura district with National Peace Council.
- Participants requested to continue and carry out similar programs to other districts as well.
- Ratnapura workshop participants willing to organize awareness raising programs in their areas.

Publications on 17th Amendment

To further public knowledge on peace-related constitutional reforms, NPC also published a book titled "The 17th Constitutional Amendment: A Collection of Analytical Articles". In response to requests from the public following the 2008 publication of this book in Sinhala and Tamil, 500 copies in English were produced and distributed in 2009. This book as also been extensively used to assist participants in NPC activities increase their knowledge on the 17th Amendment.

Increasing Knowledge on Human Rights and Strengthening Human Rights Activism among the Target Groups!



Improving target groups knowledge on human rights and human rights activism, is crucial to peace since peace cannot be achieved with human dignity or justice. NPC undertook the following strategies to achieve this Result during 2009:

Conducting awareness-raising activities, including celebrations and school competitions on Human Rights

Human Rights Quiz Competition

Human Rights violations have been a prominent aspect of the past decades of war. The end of war, however, has not translated into respect for human rights. Abductions, disappearances and other rights violations continue, while most recently, a large number of civilians have been detained in IDP camps. The North and East have been particularly affected by such violations of basic rights. There has been a significant enthusiasm both internally, and in the international community to protect and restore human rights in these areas. NPC believes that educating the younger generation, many of whom aspire for future leadership on the legal aspects of human rights, is vitally important to build up a strong civil society.

In an effort to promote human rights leadership among Advanced Level students in the North and East, NPC conducted the first in its series of Quiz Competition in the

Trincomalee District. In addition to equipping young leaders with basic human rights knowledge, it was expected that this event would also raise awareness on human rights among members in the student's society, especially in the school and the family unit.

The following outcomes were achieved during this activity:

- 543 Advanced level students from seventeen 1AB schools in the Trincomalee District sat for the Human Rights exams in Round One.
- Built up good relationship between Governments officials (Zonal Directors) in the Ministry of Education in Trincomalee.
- Built up good relationship between schools in the Trincomalee District.
- Kinnya Zonal Director requested to conduct HR awareness raising program for school children in the Kinnya zone



Commemoration of Human Rights Day 2009

Northern Children Visit the South

The relaxed security measures after the end of war in 2009 presented many opportunities for peace organizations to work across geographical divides. To take full advantage of this new access, NPC collaborated with a number of Southern schools and organizations to host fifty Jaffna children on a visit to Colombo. Almost all the visiting children had been affected by war, violence and poverty, and for all, this was their first visit outside the northern peninsula.

The children's visit allowed individuals from previously segregated communities to interact, and build strong, friendly relationships based on trust and mutual respect. The generous hospitality of Southern participants, and the open interactions of the Northern children, demonstrated that despite long years of division, there is still great potential for reconciliation. The increased need for North-South interactions, and the urgency for peace work in the North will continue to be integral to the activities of NPC's work in 2010.

Support to CBO Commemorations of International Human Rights Day

Community based organizations are critical to grassroots change. Since many civil society groups currently stay silent on the issue of human rights due to the subject's politically controversial nature, it is important that those who have the courage to

take a public stand against HR violations be supported in their efforts. NPC thus decided to assist two CBOs in their celebrations of International Human Rights Day. Through its contribution, NPC expected to strengthen civil society voice for human rights, and assist these organizations in preventing and/or addressing human rights violations.

The Vanni Cultural Foundation

The Vanni Cultural Foundation, in collaboration with NPC, hosted a number of related events on Human Rights Day to promote public awareness about human rights issues and enhance public debate. Two prominent experts on Human Rights gave lectures on this day. Mr. Selvakumaran, the Head of Colombo University's Department of Law spoke on Protecting Human Rights, while Mr. S.G. Punchihewa, Senior Lawyer discussed The Present Condition of Human Rights in Sri Lanka. Following these lectures, VCF hosted a drama that highlighted various human rights issues in a manner that is accessible to all, regardless of age, ethnicity or background.

NPC contributed to this event to strengthen civil society collaboration for a just and sustainable peace (a central theme in its future strategies). Maintaining its strong relationship with VCF will thus strengthen civil society voice, and thus also enhance NPC's own capacity



Committee of Investigation of Disappearances

To commemorate Human Rights Day, the Committee for Investigation of Disappearances organized an awareness event that centered on the issue of abductions and disappearances. This event occurred in two parts, (i), a portrait exhibition featuring the photographs and details about almost 2000 men, women and children who have been abducted or have disappeared in the years following the ceasefire; and (ii) a protest opposite state prisons by the families of those detained for protracted periods of time. NPC provided financial support for the first part of this event.

Support to North-South Youth Exchange Program

In an effort to increase interactions between youth from the North and the South, NPC lent its support to cultural exchange program between the Don Boscoe Technical Trainings Institute, the Southern Technical Institute and the Nochchiyagama and Murunkan Technical Institutes. This event provided an opportunity for students from the North to showcase their talents and increase their confidence in their abilities. Some participants from the South, who enjoyed this new exposure to this North, also bought items from the Northern students. Since the event took place near Madhu, youth from all religious groups and the religious leaders who participated were also able to visit this Church that is venerated by the Catholic community. The visit saw the participants discuss the needs of the displaced people in the area, especially regarding the rehabilitation of 65 youth who have been adversely affected by the war. With the post-war era requiring trust building and peaceful relationships across political divides, North-South activities such as these will become increasingly important for peace-building in the time to come.

Conducting Training of Trainers/Diploma Programs on Human Rights and Human Rights Law

In early 2009, the Vanni Cultural Foundation requested the intervention of NPC to assist in its Human Rights Diploma Program. After a careful evaluation, which found that the program had succeeded in creating committed human rights advocates, NPC decided to assist in its administration.

The Human Rights Diploma Program was launched the 7th of November 2009. 37 people, 15 male and 22 female, who were selected in collaboration with NPC, participate in this program, which is ongoing until the end of April 2010. The following topics were covered in 2009;

- The history and development of Human Rights concepts
- Human Rights concepts and social development
- Introduction to Human Rights and the Constitution
- Introduction to fundamental rights and the concept of equality



The aim of this project is to increase the knowledge of the targeted Track II level persons, to aid them in their understanding of Human Rights issues and propel them into actively publicizing the need for action regarding these issues. Already, many of the students have participated in NPC's peace activities including advocacy for IDP rights, and exposure visits to Vavuniya and Jaffna. The program has been enthusiastically followed to date, and will provide a deep and thorough understanding amongst influential individuals for the effective dissemination of Human Rights issues. The program undergoes continuous monitoring from NPC to ensure that it maintains its success.

Improving the Quality of NPC Programs!

The National Peace Council is committed to enhancing the quality of its services at all levels. In 2008, NPC developed a Quality Assurance program to monitor its activities, improve program administration, and increase efficiency of the organization. 2009 saw the continuing development of this program, and measurements of increased success.

Three external evaluations of NPC were undertaken during the year 2009. The EU evaluated the NPC program "Building Peace through Partnerships", which promoted reconciliation and active inter-ethnic relationships by building partnerships between Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim villages. Following this evaluation, the EU sent NPC a letter, which commended both the effects of the program and NPC's contributions to peace. CAFOD's evaluation of NPC's power-sharing project resulted in resource personnel becoming advocates for power-sharing, strengthening the program and multiplying its impact. CIDA's evaluation of NPC's program to empower tsunami-affected women in Matara resulted in the programs approval.

Also emphasized during 2009 has been enhancing the efficiency of NPC project implementation, administration and management. NPC program staff thus took part in a special training on Project Cycle Management, which covered topics such as planning, implementation, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. Since this training, staff have increased their confidence in their abilities, contributing both to donor reports and organizational plans. The Action Plan 2010, Strategic Plan 2010, and Narrative Report 2009 have thus seen improved contributions from the program staff. There have also been a number of improvements such as timely reports and accurate documentation, which have enhanced the services of NPC. In an effort to improve its abilities in monitoring and evaluation, NPC has also acquired the services of an experienced monitoring and evaluation professional, whose knowledge will serve to improve NPC's internal capacity in this area.



Reaching out the Target Audience with Peace Messages!

Sending improved peace messages to the target audience, is crucial to further public awareness and support for peace. NPC undertook the following strategies to achieve this outcome:

Increasing incidences of peace-related messages in the media

Media Releases and Political Analyses

In an effort to create public awareness on peace, democracy, and good governance, the National Peace Council produces consistent messages about critical issues in the national and international media. 2009 saw 15 media releases on issues such as IDP rights, media freedom, civil society participation, and other topics that have been central to the public discussion of the time. These media releases are often featured in the international press and sent out by list serve to more than a thousand readers.

Additionally, the Executive Director, Jehan Perera, also produces a weekly column in the national newspapers, where he discusses the political situation and encourages a continued debate on NPC's core values of peace, reconciliation and a political solution to conflict. These articles have also been referenced during the news segments of television channels.

A collection of 106 of these articles were published in a collection, "A Dove Sits on My Shoulder". 1000 Sinhala copies and 500 English copies were published in 2009. Copies were distributed to leading national libraries, including libraries for university students, the media and Parliament. To test the public demand for references on peace and democracy, copies of this book were also distributed to major bookshops (Vijitha Yapa, Lake House, Sarasavi etc.) nationwide. The response indicates that despite nationalistic trends, there is still readership for peace materials. 300 Sinhala copies and 250 English copies were sold, while 15 students contacted NPC to acquire this book a research reference. NPC also received a request from Lake House bookshops to provide them 10 copies of the collection a month to keep up with current demand.

Samayamaya Magazine

In the past years, more than 2000 groups throughout the country have collaborated with NPC to conduct peace and social service activities. Samayamaya, the NPC magazine, was thus published to keep people informed of NPC activities and create a public discussion about non-violence, political reform and a sustainable peace. In addition to contributions from the Executive Director, Jehan Perera, a diverse range of authors such as political leaders, university lecturers, religious leaders and CBOs wrote for the magazine, detailed their contributions to peace, and participated in the national discourse.

Samayamaya was published in three languages and delivered in all of NPC's working districts. It also serves as a valuable record of NPC's activities. In July 2009, Samayamaya was incorporated into the Thulawa newspaper.



Thulawa Newspaper

In the current political environment, the media encounters many obstacles to discussing peace-building and power-sharing freely. The political influence exercised over the media also means that the information getting to the public is often biased or inaccurate. To counter this trend, NPC began publishing Thulawa, a grassroots newspaper dedicated to the issues of peace and power-sharing, in July 2009.

Thulawa is a stage for civilians to spread their voice. In addition, since the media climate prevents accurate information from reaching the people, Thulawa functions as a source of factual knowledge and open discussion in the public forum. It highlights issues such as Human Rights, the 17th Amendment, the 13th Amendment, IDP and refugee camps, the APRC, and free and fair elections, and provides coverage of violence in the districts. A number of actors participate in these discussions. In the past, Thulawa has featured conversations with university lecturers, national and local journalists, university students, religious leaders, CBO leaders, lawyers, religious leaders, trade unions and other critical participants in peace.

Thulawa also features articles from journalists from a number of districts, including Trincomalee, Ampara, Colombo, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Puttalam,



Negombo, Kalutara, Kandy, Batticaloa and Vavuniya. Journalists who have participated in NPC's peace activities often write for Thulawa about their experiences with the programs and how their perception of peace is affected by their participation. Participants in other NPC activities also voice their views in this paper, allowing NPC to broaden the discussion of peace at the grassroots level.

NPC has noted a positive response to Thulawa. Readers have begun contacting NPC to ask questions about its values, to discuss the peace process and learn more about critical issues such as the presidential elections. University students use Thulawa as a reference during their research. Since its publication, NPC has also received more than 200 letters requesting regular subscriptions to Thulawa. Since peace will require the most change from the Sinhala population, Thulawa has till recently been published only in the Sinhala language. However, it has been decided to publish Thulawa in Tamil as well to widen the audience, which receives its message.

Increasing sensitivity of media personnel to good governance, democracy, human rights and other peace-related issues

Workshop on Power-Sharing and the Post-War Challenge

In November 2009, the Sabaragamuwa Madiya Mituro (Friends of Media in Sabaragamuwa) requested that NPC conduct a workshop/training on power-sharing to journalists in the area. At the time, Sabaragamuwa was experiencing heightened political tensions, since the government had just announced the provincial elections. Additionally, it was felt by the Madiya Mituro that many of the citizens in the region did not have a thorough understanding of the ethnic issue or the post-war challenges facing the nation. Realizing that the media is critical to opening the discussion of power-sharing among the South, NPC decided to hold a one-day workshop for Sabaragamuwa journalists.

30 Journalists participated in this workshop, including journalists from the political parties of the UNPC, SLFP and the JVP. Topics covered included how to present a balanced argument in the media, challenges in the post-war situation, and coverage of the ethnic grievances within the nation. Initially, many of the journalists argued with the resource persons as they did not agree with power sharing. Through discussion and debate through the day, however, the participating journalists all eventually decided that power-sharing through the provincial councils was the best way to achieve peace.

Following this workshop, the journalists began to write articles for Thulawa. Three articles have already been written; and the journalists continue to contribute. They promoted peace through power-sharing in their articles, and spoke about the need for a negotiated resolution to past problems. They interviewed provincial council members and Sabaragamuwa MPs on thematic issues such as democracy and good governance, and local issues such as poverty. These journalists continue their relationship with NPC, strengthening the media network for peace.



Media Exposure Visit to Jaffna

Due to the war, citizens from the North and South of the country have become increasingly separated from each other. Thus, when journalists from the South want to write about ethnic issues or feature news about the war, their only source of information is the military. This presents grave consequences to the impartiality of the media, since this information tends to present only the Government's point of view.

NPC thus organized 25 journalists based in the South on a three-day visit to Jaffna. The events during this visit centered on forming relationships between Southern journalists and Northern citizens so journalists could gain a more accurate understanding of life in the North. Also an important feature of this visit was the formation of new relationships between Southern journalists and journalists of the Journalists Society of the Jaffna District.



This visit created an important network between Southern journalists and journalists in the North. The participants achieved an empathetic understanding of the ethnic and political problems facing their Northern neighbors, which they now include in their articles for the media. Additionally, the Southern journalists are able to collect information directly from the Northern people instead of through the military, allowing a more accurate presentation of facts. Following their visit, all the journalists published full-page articles describing their visit, spreading the important message of reconciliation.

Increasing coverage of NPC activities among the local and international media.

With its broad access and information resources, the media is a powerful influence over the Sri Lankan people. It is thus the duty of the media to promote peace among the population, and encourage public discussions on related issues such as reconciliation, IDP resettlement and political reform. Unfortunately, the low profile given to peace issues, and the prominence given to war, means that the public is often not aware of how critical the issue of peace-building still is.

In an effort to strengthen public knowledge on peace therefore, NPC invites a number of media organizations to provide coverage of its peace activities. Many media organizations participate in NPC activities and provide coverage in their news segments for the peace messages that feature at these events. Prominent events that have been featured in 2009 are the Islam and Pluralism Conference, the commemoration of International Human Rights Day, International Peace Day and the Public Forums held on topics such as Devolution, and IDP rights. Smaller events have also been covered by the local journalists in the area.

Media organizations which have featured NPC in 2009 included,



Newspapers:

Thinakkural
Lakbima
Virakesari
Lankadeepa
Island
Daily Mirror
Ravaya
Holiday, Bangladesh
Christian Science Monitor
Sydney Morning Herald
Los Angeles Times
Financial Times

Radio:

British Broadcasting Company (BBC)
Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)
CTY FM
Asursa FM
Radio Vatican
National Public Radio, USA
Radio Australia
Swedish National Radio
German National Radio
Dutch National Radio

TV:

Young Asia Television
Maharaja Television
BBC
Al Jazeera

Wire Services

Reuters
Associated Press

Finances

04

Financial Highlights- 2009

Income

Amount identified as income for the year has come down by 24.6% though the amount received from donor agencies was increased by 137.77% during the year. The main reason for this is NPC held a fund balance of Rs 44.6Mn at the end of the year which is to be used in year 2010.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year has also come down by 24.1% compared to previous year and the % of general administrative cost reduction is 20%, due to strong cost effective measures.

Balance Sheet

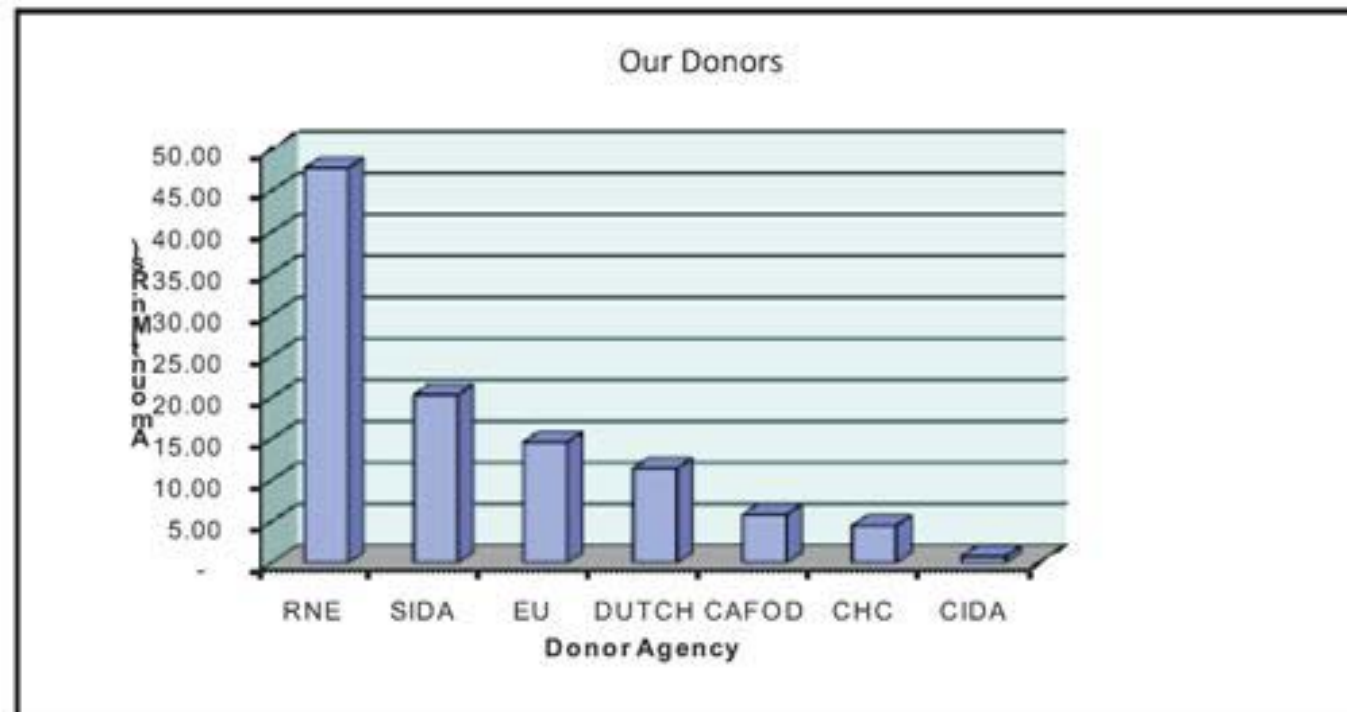
Amount invested in Cash and cash equivalent has gone up by 337% compared to year 2008. This is due to NPC having a fund balance of Rs. 44.6Mn which is being used in year 2010.

Audit

M/s Hulugalle Wickramanayake & Co completed the detailed Financial System audit assigned to them in the previous year and the report was submitted to the Board with their recommendations to improve the internal control system. M/s PriceWaterhouseCoopers carried out the annual financial audit in addition to the two project audits namely "Empowerment of women and youth through rights based peace education" funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and " Building peace through partnerships" funded by the European Union.

Our Donors

Donor Agency	Amount (Mn.Rs)	%
RNE	47.70	45.38
SIDA	20.33	19.34
EU	14.59	13.88
DU TCH	11.40	10.85
CAFOD	5.83	5.54
CHC	4.49	4.27
CIDA	0.78	0.75
	105.11	100.00

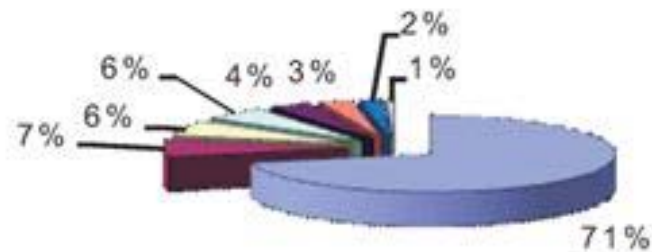




Our Projects

Donor Agency	Amount (Mn.Rs)	%
RNE	47.70	45.38
SIDA	20.33	19.34
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CAFOD	5.83	5.54
CHC	4.49	4.27
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	105.11	100.00

Our Projects



- SIDA/RNE funded project
- Pluralism in Muslim Societies
- Building Peace through Partnerships
- Pluralism in South Asia
- Building Peace through Power sharing
- Enhancing N/S inter ethnic understanding
- Empowering women in Tsunami affected areas
- Peop's movement through power sharing

LOOKING FORWARD

In the minds of most people the end of the war has meant peace. The biggest peace dividend for most people is the absence of air raids, bombs and terrorism. Feeling safe and secure in one's daily life is an important contributor to the quality of life. However, the absence of war is not the fullness of what peace is. The world renowned peace researcher Prof. Johan Galtung spoke of negative peace, which is the absence of violence. But he also spoke of positive peace, where the structural reasons for violence are also eliminated, and give rise to social conditions of justice, social welfare and equity for all people.

The government's approach is that the country needs rapid economic development which will, among other things, address the economic grievances of both the majority of people as well as the ethnic minorities. But economic development by itself will not address the political grievances of the ethnic minorities. Therefore issues of inter ethnic justice and equality need to be brought back to the centre of the reform agenda. After the war's end the structural reasons for the grievances of the ethnic minorities have not changed.

During the 15 years of its existence the National Peace Council has seen the waxing and waning of processes of political change aimed at resolving the ethnic conflict. When there was a governmental acceptance of the need for a political solution to the conflict, it was invariably accompanied by an acceptance of the role of civil society in taking that message to the people. The reverse has also been true. When a military solution is believed in, the role of civil society has been diminished.

After its war victory the government has been giving emphasis to state-led economic development as the antidote to ethnic discontent. The government has also strengthened the centralization of power in place of devolution of power. It has also put in place a more security-centred role for civil society by placing the NGO secretariat under the Ministry of Defence and restricting the role of NGOs as agents of mobilization and awareness creation amongst the people.

Although the current environment is not favourable to peace education and mobilization work, NPC takes strength in the continuing commitment of its partners who see peace in its positive dimension as encompassing democracy, human rights and good governance. Our partners in the field, our Council members and donors continue to be committed to the mission we have undertaken. As a result, NPC's work continues without relaxing either in our previous locations in the South of the country or newly in the North and East.

The end of the war has provided NPC with the opportunity to increase its work in the former war zones of the North and East, where we conduct linkage programmes in which humanitarian concepts, peace education, and spreading of pluralist values go hand in hand. Inter-community exchange visits and inter-religious committee formation for peace and ethnic reconciliation undergird these efforts.

The challenges are undoubtedly great. But the opportunities for contribution to a positive peace continue to exist. As a civic organization that is motivated by its convictions and is supported by its partners NPC will continue to be an integral part of the movement for change towards greater democracy, human rights and good governance for all, today and tomorrow.



No,12/14 ,Purana Vihara Rd,
Colombo 06, Sri Lanka
Website: www.peace-srilanka.org
Email Address: info@peace-srilanka.org
94 112818344, 94 112845127, 94 112819064