



*National  
Peace Council of  
Sri Lanka*

**Annual  
Report  
2016**

## **Vision**

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

## **Mission**

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

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## About NPC

The National Peace Council (NPC) was established as an independent and non-partisan national non-government organisation on February 2, 1995. The formation of 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 organisations. The 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 organisation of the first National Peace Conference the same year. The vision and mandate of NPC were formulated at this conference, leading to the establishment of NPC the following year.

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 that upholds the values of non-violence, respect for human rights and the free expression of ideas.



## **Members of the Board of Directors**

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Dr. T. Jayasingam (Joint Treasurer)

Professor M. S. Mookiah (Joint Treasurer)

Dr. Anita Nesiya (Director)

Professor S. H. Hasbullah (Director)

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Rev. Fr. T. Rohan Dominic

Ms. Christobel Saverimuttu (Company Secretary)

## Staff Members

Dr. Jehan Perera	Executive Director
Mr. Thushara Ranasinghe	Manager Programmes
Ms. Rupika Chandani	Manager Finance (until June)
Mr. Rukshan De Zoysa	Manager Finance (joined June)
Ms. Chithrupa Vidanapathirana	Manager Administration
Mr. Saman Seneviratne	Project Manager
Ms. Venuri de Silva	Project Manager
Ms. Lakmini Gunaratne Jayathilake	Project Coordinator (until December)
Mr. V. Thusandra	Project Coordinator (joined November)
Ms. Rasika Seneviratne	Assistant Project Manager
Mr. Shantha D. Pathirana	Senior Project Officer
Mr. H. A. Nishantha Kumara	Senior Project Officer (joined June)
Ms. Saummya Amarasinghe	Senior Project Officer (joined Oct)
Ms. Mactalin Soosainathar	Project Officer
Mr. Sinthathurai Kirubakaran	Project Officer
Mr. F. A. Nixon Croos	Project Officer (joined November)
Ms. Madhuwanthi Rubasinghe	Project Officer (joined October)
Mr. Robinson Thevasagayam	Assistant Accountant
Mr. Benet A. Samantha	IT Coordinator (until July)
Mr. Rohitha Wickramaarchchi	Graphic Designer/Administration Coordinator (until July)
Ms. Harshani P. Adikari	Accounts Assistant
Mr. Sarath Karunaratne	Driver
Mr. H. K. Sugath	Driver (until July)
Mr. P. Navaneetharan	Office Aid/Driver
Mr. A. Francis	Driver (temporary - until July)
Ms. M. G. Priyanthi	Office Aide (temporary)

## Chairperson's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the annual report and financial statements of the National Peace Council (NPC) for the year ended December 31, 2016. The Report highlights our contribution to building a strong foundation among our target groups towards a non violent attitudinal and behavioural transformation for a just and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. The Report highlights the catalytic outcomes on which peaceful communities can be built in the future. I would in particular refer to our focus on inter religious dialogue, working in 21 districts out of the 25 in the country.

Since its inception, NPC has focused on awareness creation, advocacy, and mobilization of community groups towards inter ethnic and inter religious peace building. The guiding principle of the District Inter Religious Committees (DIRCs), formed by NPC since 2010, has been that outside support to religious leaders as peace builders best succeeds when these actors are given the lead in identifying needs and designing initiatives from the outset, drawing on their religious assets. As their cohesion and their capacity have grown, DIRCs successfully engage people in their different religious and ethnic communities through inter religious activities, conflict mitigation, and through advocacy with state institutions.

Sri Lanka is the home of people of four major faiths and beliefs. We recognise the opportunities that lie before us to build a society rooted in the values enshrined in our different religions we treasure. But this society can only be built on a sure foundation of mutual respect, openness and trust. This means finding ways to live our lives of faith with integrity, and allowing others to do so too. Our different religious traditions offer us many resources for this and teach us the importance of good relationships characterised by honesty, compassion and generosity of spirit. Our inter religious committees provide opportunities for encouraging and strengthening these relationships.

Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions that can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. We have a great deal to learn from one another, which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

NPC's core strength in this context is its balanced approach and its readiness to engage with all parties, but without compromising on its principles, led by the Executive Director who is a veteran in this position. He is ably supported by the members of the Board of Directors, Governing Council and staff who have helped sustain the organization in a variety of ways. I thank them for their hard work and commitment to the cause of sustainable peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

**Joe William, PhD**

## General Secretary's Message

We are glad that the government is making a special effort to resolve the long-standing ethnic conflict by seeking to address its root causes. The government received a mandate on two occasions in 2015 from the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim people. Therefore the government is not focused on only one section of society.

While maintaining its electoral support base with the majority, the government approach is to see the people as one, rather than in terms of their ethnicity, region or religion. The approach to ethnically consensual politics on the part of the government has given rise to much hope in people both in Sri Lanka and internationally, regarding the prospects for conflict transformation.

The decision of the government to restructure the war victory celebrations of May 19 as a Day of Remembrance marked a significant break with the past. Ownership of the war victory was converted to be an important commemoration event for the whole nation.

The government announced plans to set up an Office for Missing Persons and passed the bill in Parliament in the midst of heated and controversial debates. Symbolic actions such as having the national anthem sung in Tamil on Independence Day and the President pardoning the LTTE cadre who came to assassinate him show evidence of goodwill and recognition of Tamil grievances. This way of approaching the solution has won the trust and confidence of the international community.

The fact that the two major parties in the country and the representatives of the Tamil people of the North and East are trying to reach for agreement on the protracted ethnic problem is indeed historic. Even if the people living in the North and East thought that the change of government would lead to a quick solution to the ethnic problem, this has not happened. The government has rejected foreign involvement in the judicial accountability process as an infringement of national sovereignty and the independence of the Sri Lankan people.

On the other hand, the government has shown a positive response to many other contentious issues, including removing checkpoints and army camps, releasing more and more land taken over by the security forces during the war and setting up a mechanism to search for missing persons.

I wish to thank the members of the Board of Directors and Governing Council, staff, District Committee members, and our foreign friends and donors who give material and non-material resources to enable us to fulfill our difficult tasks during this period.

I believe that as a vibrant civil society organization, NPC is playing a leading role in building up the Sri Lankan nation with the support and commitment of the international community on the basis of a Transitional Justice process.

**G. V. D. Tilakasiri**

## Directors' Report

We are pleased to present this annual report, which enables NPC to showcase its work in 2016 and the need to continue and strengthen it in 2017. The present period in the country is witnessing a lull in the Transitional Justice (TJ) process. There appears to be a strengthening of opposition forces, and of nationalistic groups, and a concomitant hesitation on the part of the government to implement its commitments in terms of human rights and TJ. The discussion around TJ and accountability is a diminishing one. It is also a negative discussion, in which TJ is equated to prosecutions for war crimes in which the Sri Lankan security forces and defence establishment will be the main targets. NPC's effort has been to broaden and deepen the public discourse utilising the networks developed over the past two decades.

In the year under review NPC worked at three levels - at the level of the TJ frameworks, individual rights to increase pace of change to individuals and to bring in marginalised voices. The major impact of this work was to keep alive the discourse on inter ethnic justice when space was shrinking under the previous government, which has since become a national priority with the election of the new government.

NPC's main constituency was inter religious groups as bridge builders and message bearers, who can give credible messages while engaging as community level problem solvers, who can speed up problem solving. Other key constituencies were marginalised women whose voice was brought to the fore, and strengthening organizations that engage in human rights and anti-torture work with a focus on healing. In addition, NPC continued its long term national and international public education through newspaper columns, media releases, media interviews and advocacy campaigns.

The key message that NPC imparted was the need to address the roots of the conflict that gave rise to three decades of war through the transitional justice process. NPC presented a multi ethnic and multi religious problem solving perspective that is non-partisan and sought to strengthen moderate opinion in the country.

The projects and programmes covered during the period under consideration were:

1. Reconciling Inter Religious and Inter Ethnic Differences (RIID) Phase III (USAID/SPICE)
2. Post-Conflict Healing: A Women's Manifesto (FOKUS)
3. Initiating Multi-level Partnership Action for Conflict Transformation IMPACT (MISEREOR/CAFOD)
4. Write to Reconcile (American Center)
5. Gender Sensitisation and Development of Gender Strategy for NPC (NEXUS fund for Civil Society Exchange Programme)
6. Promoting People's Participation in the Transitional Justice Process (Canada Fund for Local Initiatives [CFLI]/GIZ-FLICT, British High Commission)
7. Scholarships for Children of Plantation Workers in Sri Lanka (Rotary Club of Carmarthen, Wales, private donors)
8. Strengthening Civil Society Initiatives for Justice, Reconciliation and Institutional Support for National Peace Council (Royal Norwegian Embassy)
9. Inter-faith and Inter-ethnic Dialogue in Sri Lanka (British High Commission and The Asia Foundation)

## 10. Religions to Reconcile: Strengthening Inter Religious People to People Community Engagement for Reconciliation and Social Cohesion in Post Conflict Sri Lanka (USAID)

Through its work NPC is and continues to be focused on capacitating second tier civil society organizations so that there is a regional resource available on peace, reconciliation and human rights related work. This is important because to increase the scope and depth of peace building work that is being done currently, there is the need for greater activity and involvement of second tier civil society organizations. NPC finds that it is especially important to build their profiles and confidence to enhance spread of peace building work.

A key lesson for NPC in its current engagement is that messaging is a key component of peace work, both in terms of content and the message bearer. NPC focuses on tapping into groups with moral authority and leadership in local communities to build trust in processes not readily acceptable to the public. In effect the NPC's fundamental approach is a 'more people through key people' engagement.

The core element of peace building work in Sri Lanka at this current time is building consensus for the government's TJ and reconciliation process. This is especially so in the south of the country which remains largely ignorant of, and therefore is indifferent or hostile to, these efforts. The need to create public awareness on the process and thereby build support for it is an urgent one. If Sri Lanka's reconciliation project is to be successful, peace building work, especially in the rural sector, has to increase significantly and urgently. For best impact the work has to be carried out systematically and cohesively with collaboration among civil society organizations, which have a long presence in advocacy work on the ground. Through organic formations at the community level, the organization takes the message of TJ to the wider community while actively binding community leaders in different ethnic and religious communities together.

NPC was able to remain true to its core mission of strengthening inter ethnic and inter religious understanding and promoting a political solution to the ethnic conflict due in considerable part to the availability of donor funding and expresses its gratitude to its donors, especially to the Royal Norwegian Embassy for its core support for over a decade and a half. NPC was able to be selective in the projects it undertakes instead of becoming diffused in its programme thrust and was a stable presence in civil society holding consistently to its vision and mission without being co-opted or silenced by friendly or hostile governments due to the stability of core funding.

In addition, NPC had the flexibility to use its core funding to support projects or activities, which brought more benefits for target communities as well as to further NPC's Vision and Mission.

Finally I take this as an opportunity to express the indebtedness to the members of the Board and Governing Council members for their guidance and direction in meeting the challenges of working in difficult circumstances and for assisting the staff in implementing programmes in the field and as resource persons.

**Jehan Perera**  
**Executive Director**



# Programmes and Projects



# Taking Transitional Justice to the Grassroots

## Reconciling Inter Religious and Inter Ethnic Differences (RIID)

The issue of Transitional Justice (TJ), which covers the broad areas of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, has become a vital one for Sri Lanka in light of the Geneva Resolution focusing on what happened during the war. The resolution, co-sponsored by the Sri Lankan government, addresses the four pillars of TJ designed to take the country from its post conflict period to a state of reconciliation and harmony.

NPC is playing a leading role in taking the message of TJ across the country and explaining its significance at the grassroots level. It delivered responses from the people on what they would like to see implemented to policy makers at the national level. Through its work NPC has created an empowered and capacitated group of faith based leaders who are taking the message of transitional justice in a holistic sense to the general population. The key outcome is that NPC is engaging trusted messengers to convey the idea of necessary political change. It directly engages with community leaders whose support is needed to achieve popular support for constitutional change and a political solution.

Two projects, Reconciling Inter Religious and Inter Ethnic Differences (RIID) funded by USAID through its SPICE project, and Initiating Multi-level Partnership Action for Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) funded by MISEREOR and CAFOD, carried this message through its religious leaders to the community level. Religious leaders, who are trusted message bearers, are well equipped to create awareness among the general population.





A separate project funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), GIZ-FLICT and the British High Commission trained civil society members, media, public servants, legal experts and academics on TJ. NPC contributed to correct the misconception about the concept, which has been widely articulated as being primarily about war crimes prosecutions.

Under RIID, a series of orientation meetings were held to explain the significance of the Geneva resolution and also to discuss relevant issues such as devolution of power and TJ mechanisms.

## Truth Forums

Sustaining the reconciliation process requires widespread support from the general population. One of the key problems NPC observed in its fieldwork was the lack of empathy of participants for the other side's experience of the war.

This lack of empathy can be attributed to the participants being embedded in their own communities, and being the recipients of a single narrative from their own perspective. Truth Forums designed by NPC provided a platform to share the wartime experiences of different communities. The Truth Forums were moderated by religious leaders and other prominent local level personalities including retired judges and government officers, and provided an opportunity for the larger community to see that they too have a role to play in the search for justice to victims.

DIRC members were trained to identify a victim and told how to collect their stories so that they could understand the importance of truth telling in building reconciliation. DIRC members gained the skills to serve as a compassionate council at a community level. Victims will be able to submit their stories to the Truth Commission to be set up by the government in the national reconciliation process.



## Causes of Tension and Conflict

In addition to taking TJ to the grassroots level through the RIID project, DIRCs, in the process of seeking to bring peace and harmony to the communities they live in, identify various potential areas of conflict and find solutions before tension and violence escalate.

At the Ampara DIRC, among the issues that arose at the discussions, was the local level mistrust between the Tamil and Muslim communities and the government, and between the communities themselves. This had impeded the plan to make Kalmunai into a municipality, as it would affect control over adjacent local government entities.

Another issue related to devolution of power at the provincial level with members of different communities expressing concern that envisaged constitutional changes could be to the detriment of their own community. The need to have more facilitated dialogue, as occurred during these meetings, was emphasised as a way to build greater trust and sensitivity to the other.

At the Kandy DIRC, an issue was about the commentary at the Kandy perahera that was done only in Sinhala. This meant that Tamil people could not understand the explanations of the rituals, dances and history even though there were several Tamil cultural items included in the pageants.

The second issue was protests about road name boards, bus name boards and signs on government buildings having errors in the Tamil versions. Despite many complaints, no action had been taken to correct them, giving the impression that the government was not interested in advancing the cause of reconciliation between the two communities.

The third issue concerned the classification of estate Tamils as Indian Tamils, which they said led to discrimination when it came to getting birth certificates, identity cards and government jobs. People from the estates in the district wanted to be classified as Sri Lankan Tamils on documentation.

At the Nuwara Eliya DIRC, the absence of government officials who were fluent in Tamil was raised. Officials taking down names for a birth certificate or a form, for example, wrote them down in Sinhala as they heard them and often got the spelling wrong. As a result, there was a great deal of confusion and misinterpretation. People felt the government was not taking their requests for Tamil speaking officers seriously. They wanted officers who understood proper pronunciation and could write in the language.

***“We need to change people’s attitudes so that they respect each other’s religions. If we fail to protect law and order in the country, it will be impossible to follow the values and ethics of any religion. Civil society has a responsibility to face this challenge.”***

**Buddhist Monk  
Kandy DIRC**

## Success Stories

### Jaffna

In July this year there was a clash between Tamil and Sinhala students at the Jaffna University. The immediate cause of the conflict was whether a Sinhala cultural dance could be added to a welcome ceremony for incoming first year students.

The university administration invited NPC and its partner Centre for Communication Training (CCT) to conduct a peace building programme, which was attended by over 500 students. About half of them were Sinhala students, with almost the same number of Tamil students and a lesser number of Muslim students.

As part of the day's events, the students received a crash course on non-violent communication and were afterwards divided into groups. In order to ensure maximum of interaction between the different communities, the groups were mixed by ethnicity.

They were asked to give answers to three questions: what were the issues they faced, what could the university authorities do to address them, and what could they as students do to help resolve the problems.

The students wanted better infrastructure facilities for their studies. They asked for free Wi-Fi facilities to enable them to access the Internet, which was available in universities such as Moratuwa University.

In addition the students asked for improved language training facilities so that they could bridge the language barrier and for more inter cultural and social activities so that they could interact more with each other. They also asked for more interaction with students from other faculties through sports.

### Polonnaruwa

Most people living in the Polonnaruwa District are Sinhalese Buddhists. There are many border villages that were attacked during the war.

Extremists have been able to promote their ideology and mislead people, damaging the relationship between the Sinhalese and other communities by using "Sinha Le" stickers and other means.

To counter these efforts, the Polonnaruwa DIRC organized a campaign to distribute leaflets and put stickers on vehicles to promote importance of inter religious and inter ethnic harmony by emphasising equality irrespective of ethnicity, religion, caste, or political party.

DIRC members and youth, together with religious leaders, carried out the campaign in the Kaduruwela and Polonnaruwa town areas.

The police, Ceylon Transport Board and other government authorities supported the campaign. Many people who read the leaflet and wanted to display the sticker on their vehicles pointed out that this was an important effort to counter extremist movements.



## Nuwara Eliya

In Nuwara Eliya, DIRC members moved swiftly to defuse a volatile situation in the Hatton area, sparked by rumours of a hotel being built close to the sacred mountain of Sri Pada.

A Muslim man from Dubai had bought some land a few years ago and was now planning to build the hotel. This led to a group of monks and Sinhala extremists carrying lion flags to protest in Nallathanni, disrupting the communal peace that had existed in the area. The matter resulted in distrust and arguments between the two communities.

In an attempt to ease the tensions, DIRC members decided to hold their own rally in Norwood town, which was attended by religious and community leaders, teachers, students and the public carrying banners and placards stating the virtues of ethnic and religious harmony.

The rally ended at a Sinhala school on Norwood estate where religious leaders spoke about the need for coexistence and tolerance and peace between religions. They told the audience not to be influenced by extremists and troublemakers.

A multi cultural programme was later held to show the different aspects of diversity and unity.



## Initiating Multi-level Partnership Action for Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)

Under the Initiating Multi-level Partnership Action for Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) project, six new DIRCS were set up in Polonnaruwa, Hambantota, Kalutara, Ratnapura, Kurunegala and Badulla.

NPC does work at the grassroots and intermediary levels and directly engages with community leaders and opinion formers whose support is needed to achieve popular support for constitutional change and a political solution. Through our work we have been creating acceptance and political will for a process that needs to be taken forward on a macro scale.

Workshops were held to create awareness throughout the country of the requirements to progress from post war to post conflict development by explaining the principles of TJ. Workshops were also held on pluralism, good governance, democracy and the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission.

Other workshops highlighted the theme of early warning for members of DIRCs. Participants were trained on how to recognise impending conflicts and how to respond. Topics include the basic elements and various stages of a conflict, how to do conflict analysis using conflict mapping and later at the field level, how to take necessary action to protect their communities from escalated violations and to support post war transition.

Following a training of trainers workshop selected members, participants were provided with a more broad based training to ensure that conflicts in their areas are resolved through interventions before they escalate.





## Taking TJ to Jaffna Students

Fifty faculty members and 60 students of the University of Jaffna attended two workshops on TJ. The students were asked to work in groups to prioritise one of the four pillars of TJ. They discussed the question and reported back to the workshop.

Five of the nine student groups chose institutional reform as their first priority, as it was the long term solution. They said that if this was achieved, the other three pillars could be accomplished over time. Four of the nine groups chose truth as their priority. They said that without truth it was difficult to find out what the problem was and what the best answer would be. It was necessary for the government to give detailed answers about what had happened during the war, as well as addressing suspicions that Sinhalese colonisation was still happening in the North and East.

## TJ Training and Discussions With Government and Civil Society

A series of training workshops on TJ for policy makers, civil society leaders, security forces personnel and government officials in Colombo, Jaffna and Trincomalee.

One of the workshops was for DIRC members to lay the groundwork for further sessions in the districts so that the concepts of TJ could be brought to the grassroots level. TJ expert and trainer Patrick Burgess, who has been involved in helping countries around the world to establish Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), gave participants an extensive grounding on what TJ meant and how it could be administered.

Through video clips, group exercises and drawing from his knowledge of other TJ mechanisms, Mr. Burgess touched on a wide range of topics including the four pillars of TJ; International Humanitarian Law as it pertains to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; the International Criminal Court; international, national and hybrid tribunals and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs).



## Strengthening TJ at Community Level

NPC initiated a discussion with civil society organisations from several districts of the country on strengthening the TJ and reconciliation process, especially at the community and grassroots level focusing on district and community-based organizations.

The consultations were intended to provide inputs to the government as it develops its TJ, peace and reconciliation programme. Partnerships between the government and development stakeholders are vital to the success of the process. The ideas and suggestions of the participants were sent to the Task Force appointed to facilitate people's participation in the reconciliation process.

One of the main issues raised was how to get people involved in the process and put message of TJ across to the grassroots. At district level, provincial level and local level, it was necessary to know what people are saying about TJ, if they know about the government's proposals and what they think about them.

During the discussions, two key messages were highlighted. The first was the limited information available to the general population regarding TJ issues. There was an absence of strong and systematic communication by the government. Participants pointed out that the government was composed of two leaders and two parties, and this resulted in an absence of clear messaging.

Second, the message from the Tamil-speaking participants from the North and East was their scepticism about the ultimate outcome of the on going TJ process. This highlighted the need for greater inclusion of such groups into the process and for trust building with them.

The role of civil society in these circumstances in taking the message to the people and in ensuring a sense of participation was extremely important.



# Reconciliation Through Sharing and Healing

NPC's project, Post Conflict Healing: A Women's Manifesto, was implemented with the support of FOKUS from April 2014 to December 2016 in nine districts across the country that were both directly and indirectly affected by the war: Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee, Ampara, Galle, Hambantota, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, and Puttalam.

The findings of the project were summarised in policy briefing papers, a manifesto and a video - the outcomes of the objective to bring women's voices at the grass roots to the forefront of the reconciliation process.

The project mobilised women to take an active part in community healing, to establish lasting peace and to increase their participation in the process of post conflict transition. It also trained participants on TJ, women's rights, role of women in post conflict society, reconciliation, the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and its recommendations and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that deals with women and security.

The briefing papers, which covered the topics of restitution of land and property and economic reintegration, physical security, psychological recovery, democratisation and governance and justice, were presented to decision makers with the aim that the affected women's concerns and recommendations will be considered in the future reconciliation process to ensure that it is more gender sensitive.

During the project, NPC worked with nine partner organizations providing training on gender dimensions on TJ, healing activities for war affected communities and exchange visits. NPC has shown it is possible to build political support from women, who are a marginalised sector, for a larger TJ process. Together with its partners in the field, NPC created empathy among the divided ethnic communities and generated support for a larger process of healing.





At a workshop for war widows, several women spoke about the attitude towards war widows in society and how these attitudes translated into harassment and withdrawal of support for vulnerable women. War affected women and their children were perceived as unprotected and thus easy prey.

As they became war widows and headed households, they lost support from in-laws as well as from their own families. This was an indicator of the stigma surrounding war widows and female headed households.

The women also shared grievances over not receiving the right benefits as war widows. They wanted counselling for the trauma they suffered. The participants were eager to share their stories and hardships. It was evident that they were still suffering and needed psychosocial help. They were also in need of financial assistance to bring up their children.

During an exchange visit aimed at sharing experiences, exchanging ideas and discussing how the process of healing was progressing, military widows from Galle and Hambantota said they faced social stigma after their husbands' deaths while women from Vavuniya and Mannar said they had been displaced due to the war. Some had no permanent housing while others could not repay loans, faced gender violence and had lost property.

*“My husband died in the war when my child was two years old. I was angry because I thought Tamil people were the cause of my suffering but when NPC took us on a visit to the North, I understood that the women there had suffered even more. Now we are not angry, we sympathise with the Tamil people and realise we have to be together. NPC has been a pillar of strength to me.”*

**Yamuna Badrani  
Hambantota**



In Mannar, women were still searching for missing relatives. Parents whose children were missing had received letters from the Presidential Commission investigation missing persons that were written in English, which they were unable to read.

Participants related several experiences and success stories of past activities to demonstrate how women at the grass roots level could get together to bring about change and find solutions to their problems.

At the end of the project, the submissions collected by the women were published as a Women's Manifesto and presented to Minister of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages Mano Ganesan, Secretary-General of the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms Mano Tittawella and Chairperson of the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms Manouri Muttetuewagama, at a national workshop in Colombo.

## A Story of Change

**Meeran Fareena** (48) is from Chavakachcheri in Jaffna, where she lived with her husband, a daily labourer. In 1989 her husband was abducted by the LTTE when her son was just six months old. In October 1990, the LTTE ordered all Muslims to leave Jaffna within two hours. "We left behind our entire life when we left. I did not take anything but an extra set of clothing. At that time I was still searching for my husband, I was so lost and hurt," Meeran said.

She went to the Vanni with the rest of the Muslim community through the forest, undergoing many hardships. They temporarily settled in Puttalam and then moved again to Palavi village, which became an IDP camp. An NGO helped them to put up huts. "These huts were tiny, we didn't even have a place to sleep. There were only two temporary toilets and one water tank which dispensed water irregularly," she said.

Meeran went to work to feed her child. "In the eyes of society it was a bad thing and they made stories about what a single Muslim women was doing, going out on her own and finding money." She had dropped out of school because of the war and could not read or write, so she went to the Middle East as a housemaid in 1998. After returning to Sri Lanka, she is working as a daily labourer.

"My life has been a struggle. I have been living in Puttalam for about 20 years now. I still don't know what has happened to my husband," she said.

*"After attending the workshops, I saw a positive difference in myself. I have many unforgettable memories. I was able to understand and share stories with other women who were also affected like me. I felt I wasn't alone, which was a relief and, most importantly, healing. I made many new friends, which has helped me to feel positive. All I want now is to spend my life in peace with my son."*

**Meeran Fareena**



## Forging a Pluralistic Society at the Community Level

A new project was launched in October, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), that focuses on strengthening community networks mentored by religious leaders, and engaging them in building consensus for TJ and a pluralistic identity.

The project, Religions to Reconcile: Strengthening Inter-Religious People-to-People Community Engagement for Reconciliation and Social Cohesion in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka, is implemented in partnership with Generations for Peace (GFP), an international peace building organisation based in Amman, Jordan.

Although the government has begun a process of reconciliation with several initiatives, progress on the path towards reconciliation continues to face internal and external challenges. It is in this backdrop that the people-to-people initiative engages ethnic and religious communities divided by the war to increase their contribution to political reform through ongoing engagement with reconciliation.

The project is strengthening the capacity of DIRCs to lead engagement in social and political reform for sustainable TJ. The project builds upon the credibility of DIRCs as message bearers in order to support people to engage across conflict divides, break down barriers, foster acceptance for a pluralistic national identity, and support inter district community engagement through exchange visits between DIRC-led communities.

Under the new project, NPC will set up two new DIRCs in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, and develop the capacity of six already established DIRCs. The 26-month project targets Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar, Puttalam, Nuwara Eliya, Galle, Matara and Ampara districts.



It is envisaged that grassroots communities in the districts will be mentored by multi faith religious leaders and as a result begin to understand, appreciate and finally support the TJ process in the country and work together to evolve a pluralistic national identity.

To start off the project, eight project orientation meetings were held for religious leaders, local civil society representatives and government officials as well as young people and media personnel.

The orientation meetings included an introduction to the current socio political climate which covered the ethnic conflict, the rise of ethno religious tension in the post war era, the need for empathy building among communities, building positive peace and embracing a TJ mechanism.

Two day TJ trainings were held in the eight districts with internal and external resource persons. Participants included religious leaders, members of NGOs, media personnel, government officials, members of mediation boards and youth.

***“Our country is multi ethnic and multi religious and we speak in different languages. There is no point in blaming each other for the mistakes of the past. We must integrate respect for other religions within our education system and move forward with our next generation. We must learn to identify ourselves as Sri Lankan and be united in our diversity.”***

**K. Thirukumaran  
School Principal  
Mullaitivu**





# Tackling Hot Spots Through Inter Faith and Inter Ethnic Dialogue

A new project, Inter faith and Inter ethnic Dialogue in Sri Lanka, commenced in 2016 aimed at supporting inter faith and inter ethnic dialogue to reduce ethno religious tension in selected locations and ensure that national reconciliation processes and policies take account of ethnic and religious viewpoints.

Despite positive post war period developments, there has been a resurfacing of old tensions where the three major ethnic groups - Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims - live in close proximity and have a history of conflict. There is higher possibility that these ethno religious tensions could erupt with proposed government reforms such as truth and reconciliation mechanisms and constitutional reforms including power sharing.

The project supports inter faith and inter ethnic dialogue at the local level in order to create networks and understanding among religious and other community leaders in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts, both located within a high risk province. For this purpose, a DIRC was formed in Trincomalee and the existing one in Batticaloa was expanded to include areas prone to conflict within the district.

The project, which will run for two and a half years, works with religious leaders to empower them to better understand and contribute to policy advocacy at the local and national level. The project is supported by the Asia Foundation with funding from the British High commission.

Training and capacity building for DIRCs, which include Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious leaders and lay persons, contain topics such as nonviolent communication, early warning and conflict sensitivity, mediation, gender, social cohesion, TJ, documentation and referrals, constitutional reforms and facilitation. Committee members meet monthly to address, discuss and resolve local inter religious and inter ethnic disputes.



# Creative Writing Depicts Trauma of War and Prejudice

Write to Reconcile, a creative writing project supported by NPC and funded by the American Centre, continued for its third year led by award winning authors Shyam Selvadurai and Nayomi Munaweera.

The innovative writing project brought together emerging writers from Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan diaspora, as well as Sri Lankan teachers and professors, who were interested in writing fiction, memoir or poetry on the issues of conflict, peace, reconciliation, memory and trauma.

*“This project was not just about literature but also about humanity. We saw the hardships faced by villagers affected by the war and heard their stories. The project taught us about life, love and hope.”*

**Sandeep Chamodaya**

Over the course of a weeklong residential workshop and two three week online forums, participants learnt the craft of writing and produced work that addressed the themes of the project. The work produced by the participants will be published in the Write to Reconcile Anthology 3.

Participants made two field trips into the Vanni and the border villages to meet villagers from these areas, sit in their homes and find out first hand their experiences of the war and about their lives post war.

In the past, attending a residential workshop in Sri Lanka was a mandatory part of the project, but diaspora participants were not always able to make the journey. This year, Write to Reconcile offered places for participants from the diaspora who wanted to only participate online.



# Submissions to Consultation Task Force on Truth Seeking and Institutional Reform

Through its work at the grass roots level, NPC was able to gather opinions from religious and community leaders, civil society and the public on what sort of transitional justice mechanisms they felt would be best for Sri Lanka to adopt in its quest for reconciliation and a lasting peace.

These views, along with NPC's own analysis, were compiled and presented to the Consultation Task Force on Truth Seeking and Institutional Reform.

**Truth Seeking:** An option for the government would be to consider the establishment of a Truth Seeking Commission with a mandate to look into the entire phase of armed conflict. Unlike the South African version, the government has stated that its variant will not be for the purpose of amnesty, but rather to facilitate the healing and reconciliation process of the victims. If the commission has no amnesty provision, the perpetrator has very little incentive to confess the truth.

We believe that the Sri Lankan ethos is not conducive to a process such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in which victims and perpetrators confronted each other. Our preference is for a truth seeking approach by providing an environment whereby a formal inquiry can take place within a safe space, in which victims in particular can express themselves freely and with a sense of security rather than to utilise an inquisitorial and confrontational approach.

**Accountability, Reparations and Missing Persons:** Most people said that the government had yet to take this message clearly to the masses of people. They agreed that the truth about the past needed to be ascertained. Most agreed that those who committed crimes outside of their duties should be punished, and once it was explained to them, close to half of them had no objection to a special court with international participation.

What was encouraging was the willingness of the participants to appreciate the need for a lasting political solution to the problem of the Sri Lankan state with the ethnic and religious minorities.

During discussions with civil society groups, two key messages get highlighted. The first is the limited information available to the general population regarding these issues. There is an absence of strong and systematic messaging by the government. Second, the message from the Tamil-speaking participants from the North and East is their scepticism about the ultimate outcome of the on going transitional justice process. This highlights the need for greater inclusion of such groups into the process and for trust building with them. The role of civil society in these circumstances in taking the message to the people and in ensuring a sense of participation is extremely important.

**Institutional Reform:** During consultations with civil society to ascertain what people think are necessary Constitutional reforms, various amendments were suggested including:

- The necessity to fully implement the 13th amendment so that the rights of the minorities would be ensured. Provincial Councils should be given police powers in keeping with the aspirations of the Tamil people, who wanted to manage their own affairs.
- Since some of the Sinhala people did not fully understand the concept of devolution, it was suggested that religious leaders get involved in the explaining it to the public. If Sinhala people in the South accepted the concept of devolution for their own provinces, as they have, it was felt that the rest of the majority community could be brought around to devolving power to the provinces.



- The Constitution should have provisions to safeguard the independence of institutions that were now very politicized. With constitutional changes, first thing must be a change in the structure and composition of the judiciary to allow Tamil people to get their rights. Sinhala people must know that Tamil people's rights must be addressed. Judiciary must be independent.
- A new Constitution must establish minority rights. The Constitution should have a provision to address demographic imbalances that are created artificially to affect the number of a certain ethnic minority in a certain area through resettlement, and which affects their representation in Parliament.
- Article 126 of the Constitution needs to be amended to make it easier for people to access the courts to vindicate their fundamental rights. The right to invoke courts where there is interference by the Executive with the independence of the Judiciary and a clause included in the Constitution that all orders must be given writing which must be kept of record by the writer and the recipient. Orders not given in writing should not be carried out if they are unethical or unfair in any way to any person.
- As far as the process of people's participation in the Constitutional reform process goes, it was pointed out that ordinary people were excluded because they did not have access to email, text or fax and were unable or unwilling to attend public hearings.

## Submissions to the Zonal Task Force Western Province

The Zonal Task Force for the Western Province, which invited submissions from civil society organisations and members of the public, received submissions from NPC members on August 15. An NPC team obtained a meeting with the Task Force at the Divisional Secretariat Office in Colombo. The idea of a Compassionate Council consisting of religious clergy that was mooted by the government delegation to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2015, as a part of the Truth Commission, was supported by the NPC members.

NPC members proposed that the Compassionate Council should be linked to district level religious clergy who could be message bearers of the reconciliation process and also serve as psycho social support structures to victims who might provide evidence before the Truth Commission and suffer re-traumatisation as a result.

In addition, the NPC members provided data and information about the consultation process that NPC itself has been engaging with community leaders on the government's proposed reconciliation and transitional justice approach. The positive feedback they have been receiving in their consultation process includes a willingness to accommodate international participation in the envisaged judicial accountability mechanism.

They emphasised the need to broad base and further intensify the process of public education on the reconciliation process, as knowledge about what the government is proposing to do is not well known at the community level. This leaves open a vacuum of knowledge that can be filled by nationalist propaganda and inaccurate information that can reduce the public support for the transitional justice process.



# Media and Advocacy

During the year, NPC disseminated political commentaries, newsletters and press releases that were published in the mass media in three languages. The material was uploaded on NPC's website. Its Executive Director, Dr. Jehan Perera, contributed a regular column to a national newspaper that mentioned NPC's work.

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

## **Need To Reform State Institutions To Ensure Justice To All In The New Year**

During the past year the rise of inter religious tensions particularly in the North and East was marked, with an increase in hate speech, acts of physical violence and illegal constructions. Those who engaged in such acts did so as if they enjoy impunity, which is not in the interest of national reconciliation and ethnic harmony. The responsibility of the government is to ensure that the Rule of Law is applied at all times whether it concerns those who occupy positions of religious or secular leadership. The police need to be trained to be pluralist and secular in their outlook and to take action whoever may break the law. The National Peace Council calls for all state institutions to be reformed to be in consonance with the requirements of a post war multi ethnic and multi religious society.

30.12.16

## **Immediate Deterrent Action Needed To Eradicate Inter Community Violence**

After a two year lull that followed replacement of the former government through the electoral process, public manifestations of inter community tension have increased in recent months. There are indications of political manoeuvring behind these efforts to disturb the peace in the country and to bring ethno-religious nationalism to the fore.

25.11.16

## **Restoring Normalcy Is a Priority**

The importance of restoring normalcy to the North has become evident in the aftermath of the fatal shooting incident involving two university students. The students were shot by police when they failed to stop at a police check point in the early hours of the morning. Students and businesses in Jaffna have been engaging in public protests. There are suspicions voiced in the North that this was a planned incident to deliberately create tensions, which would justify a continued strong military presence. In a context in which the North (and East) of the country continue to remain militarized, with large contingents of military personnel in the two provinces, such incidents are also bound to be seen in ethnic terms and therefore contribute to a spiral of negative sentiment.

24.10.16

## **OMP Is Part of a Larger Process of Transitional Justice**

The passage of the Office of Missing Persons Bill (OMP), albeit in controversial circumstances in Parliament, augers well for the forward movement of the reconciliation process. The National Peace Council welcomes the new law, and the legal foundation of the first of the four transitional justice mechanisms that the government has pledged to establish. We are disappointed that the Joint Opposition members failed to cooperate with the parliamentary process, and refused to debate the new law according to the agreed schedule in parliament. It was unfortunate that those who were human rights champions in the 1980 and 1990s, and widely admired for this, displayed their opposition to OMP by word and deed.

28.06.16

# Financial Report



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APAG/ENDP/AD

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA (GUARANTEE) LIMITED

### Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited, ("the Company"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2016, and the statement comprehensive income, statement of changes in reserves and, statement of cash flow for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### *Board's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

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

### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for basis for our audit opinion.

### *Opinion*

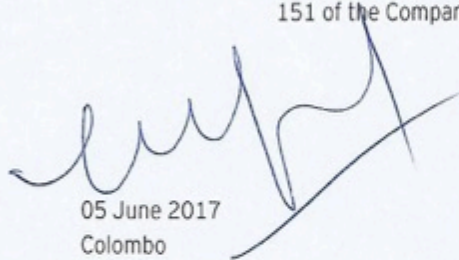
In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Company as at 31 December 2016, and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the Sri Lanka Statement of Recommended Practice for Not-for-Profit Organizations (Including Non-Governmental Organisation) (SL SoRP-NPO's [including NGO's]) issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka.

(Contd...2/)

**Report on other legal and regulatory requirements**

As required by Section 163(2) of the Companies Act No. 7 of 2007, we state the following:

- a) The basis of opinion and Scope and Limitations of the audit are as stated above.
- b) In our opinion :
  - We have obtained all the information and explanations that were required for the audit and, as far as appears from our examination, proper accounting records have been kept by the Company,
  - The financial statements of the Company, comply with the requirements of Section 151 of the Companies Act No. 7 of 2007



05 June 2017  
Colombo



National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

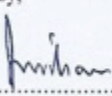
As at 31 December 2016

ASSETS	Note	2016 Rs.	2015 Rs.
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant & Equipment	5	66,958,712	68,847,082
		<u>66,958,712</u>	<u>68,847,082</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Inventories	17	58,997	52,204
Short Term Deposits	6	8,548,697	10,020,830
Receivables	7	6,430,582	2,084,271
Cash & Bank Balances	22.1	13,850,343	8,924,459
		<u>28,888,619</u>	<u>21,081,764</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u><u>95,847,331</u></u>	<u><u>89,928,846</u></u>
<b>FUNDING &amp; LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>			
Restricted Funds	10	14,922,164	5,838,308
Unrestricted Funds	8	16,338,577	16,153,639
Reserve A	9	73,223	73,223
Reserve B	11	10,704,783	13,204,783
Revaluation Reserves		42,942,819	42,942,819
		<u>84,981,566</u>	<u>78,212,772</u>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Staff Welfare Fund	12	725,852	725,852
Retirement Benefit Liability	13	3,645,218	4,402,590
Non-Current Portion of Interest bearing loans and borrowings	15	724,605	2,154,574
Deferred Liability	14	503,562	703,562
		<u>5,599,237</u>	<u>7,986,578</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Income Tax Payable	20	566,919	394,114
Creditors	16	3,116,792	1,494,384
Bank Overdraft	22.2	247,996	839,801
Current Portion of Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings	15	1,334,821	1,001,197
		<u>5,266,528</u>	<u>3,729,496</u>
<b>Total Funding and Liabilities</b>		<u><u>95,847,331</u></u>	<u><u>89,928,846</u></u>

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

  
 .....  
 Finance Officer

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

  
 .....  
 Director

  
 .....  
 Director

The accounting policies and notes on pages 7 through 20 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.

## National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

## STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Year ended 31 December 2016

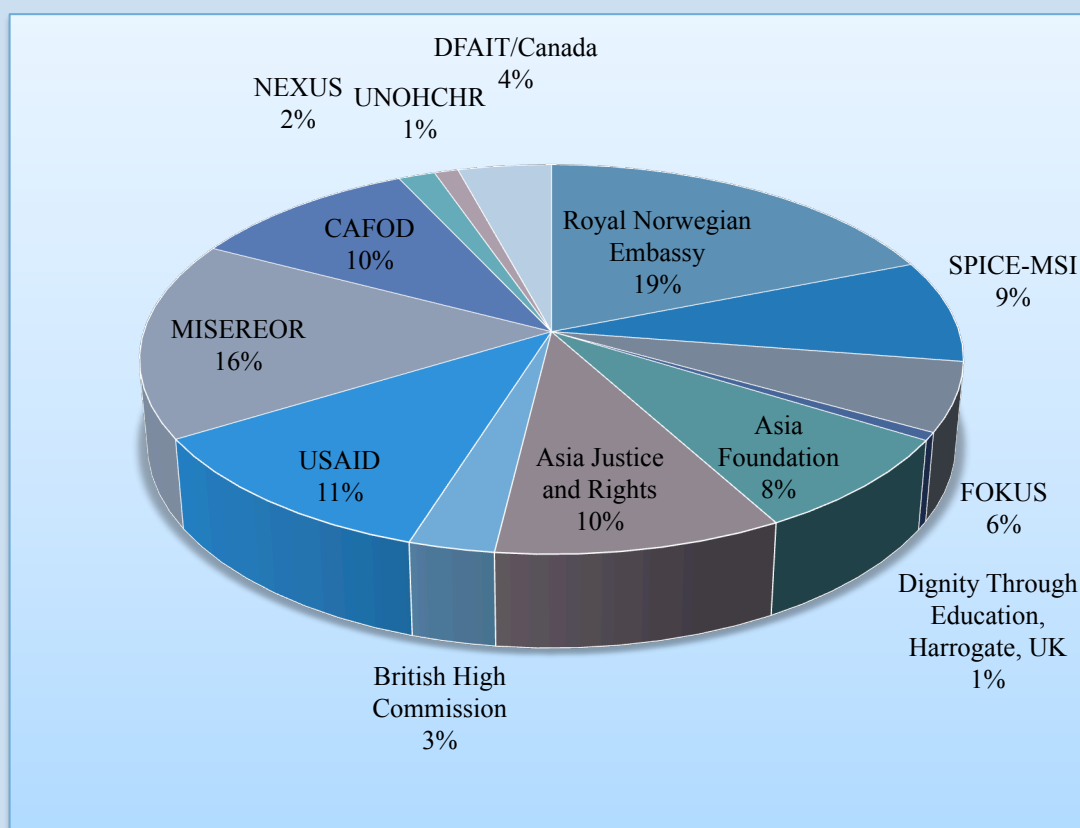
	Note	2016 Rs.	2015 Rs.
Incoming Resources	4	64,773,925	51,543,875
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>			
Project Expenses	18.1	(62,273,925)	(48,253,839)
Administrative Expenses	18.1	(6,785,434)	(6,186,296)
Total Operating Expenditure		<u>(69,059,359)</u>	<u>(54,440,135)</u>
<b>Net Deficit on Operating Activities</b>		(4,285,434)	(2,896,260)
Revenue Earned from Other Activities	19	5,400,098	3,739,260
Finance Cost	21	(362,807)	(250,803)
<b>Net Surplus Before Tax</b>		<u>751,857</u>	<u>592,197</u>
Income Tax Expenses	20.1	(566,919)	(394,114)
<b>Net Surplus After Tax</b>		<u>184,938</u>	<u>198,083</u>
<b>Other Comprehensive Income</b>			
Revaluation Gain on Land		-	33,180,000
Revaluation Gain on Building		-	9,762,819
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>		<u>184,938</u>	<u>43,140,902</u>

The accounting policies and notes on pages 7 through 20 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



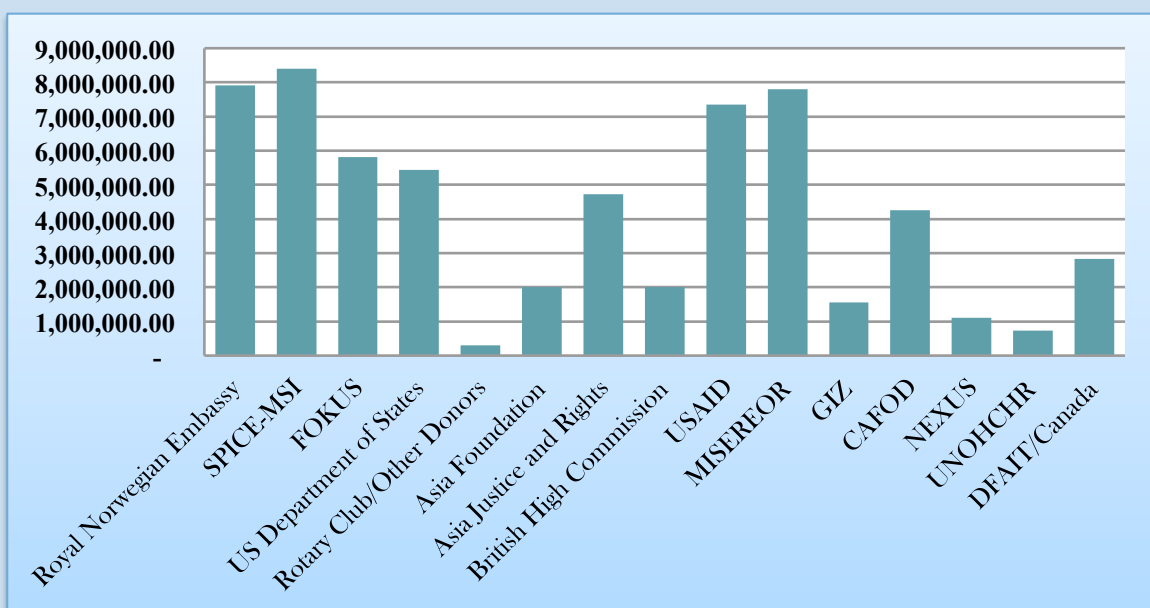
## Funding Portfolio

Name of Donor Organization	Amount (LKR)	Percentage
Royal Norwegian Embassy	12,802,500.00	18.95%
SPICE-MSI	5,737,140.00	8.49%
FOKUS	3,876,000.00	5.74%
Dignity Through Education, Harrogate, UK	446,136.00	0.66%
Asia Foundation	5,506,013.00	8.15%
Asia Justice and Rights	6,699,000.00	9.92%
British High Commission	2,000,000.00	2.96%
USAID	7,682,788.00	11.37%
MISEREOR	11,106,120.16	16.44%
CAFOD	7,006,807.00	10.37%
NEXUS	1,115,793.66	1.65%
UNOHCHR	726,950.00	1.08%
DFAIT/Canada	2,839,749.00	4.20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67,544,996.82</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



## Funds Utilisation

Project	Name of Donor Organization	Amount (LKR)	Amount (LKR)
Core Funding	Royal Norwegian Embassy	7,914,081.00	12.71%
Reconciling Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Differences (SPICE)	SPICE-MSI	8,395,219.00	13.48%
Post-Conflict Healing: A Women's Manifesto	FOKUS	5,818,775.05	9.34%
Write to Reconcile 3	US Department of States	5,447,423.03	8.75%
Scholarship Program for University	Rotary Club/Other Donors	305,200.00	0.49%
Inter-faith and Inter-ethnic Dialogue in Sri Lanka	Asia Foundation	2,014,039.95	3.23%
Accountability & Preventing Torture by Strengthening Survivors in Asia	Asia Justice and Rights	4,731,444.00	7.60%
Building Support for Transitional Justice	British High Commission	2,000,000.00	3.21%
Religions to Reconcile	USAID	7,344,824.39	11.79%
Initiating Multi Level Partnership Action for Conflict Transfer Motion	MISEREOR	7,799,978.73	12.53%
Promoting People's Partnership in the Transitional Justice Process	GIZ	1,557,036.00	2.50%
Creating Awareness and Building Consensus on Post - conflict Reconciliation Healing	CAFOD	4,263,411.37	6.85%
Civil Society Exchange Program	NEXUS	1,115,794.00	1.79%
Mobilizing Second Tier Civil Society and Local Communities for Transitional Justice	UNOHCHR	726,950.00	1.17%
Promoting People's Partnership in the Transitional Justice Process	DFAIT/Canada	2,839,749.00	4.56%
		<b>62,273,925.52</b>	<b>100.00%</b>





# Way Forward

A political solution to the ethnic conflict must remain the primary goal of peace builders. While the country has progressed significantly in term of post war normalisation from where it was in 2015, it still continues to be a normalisation that is built on shifting sands. Without a firm foundation based on constitutional reform and good governance there remains the possibility of a return to conflict. The nationalist opposition has emboldened those who are intolerant and racist. Their success has been followed by acts of violence and intimidation against the ethnic and religious minorities, especially Muslims, by nationalist groups.

However, the window of opportunity for constitutional reform and good governance still remains open. The Government of National Unity continues to remain in power and is in its third year. Government leaders have pledged to submit a constitutional draft to Parliament shortly. The political parties have agreed to submit their responses to the draft proposals that have been presented to them. There is a need to maintain momentum. This is what civil society needs to push. We need to build public support for constructive change.

The Prime Minister has said that, “We cannot drag the constitution making process anymore. President Sirisena was elected in 2015 to fulfill this purpose.” Mahatma Gandhi’s approach was to trust the people, for “...theirs is an amazingly responsive nature.” There needs to be an all out effort by the government, in partnership with civil society groups to dialogue with the people, explain what it wants to do, win their trust, win the referendum to come and win sustainable reconciliation.

In the year ahead NPC is resolved to forge ahead together with the rest of civil society and political parties who are likeminded and committed to change. NPC believes that a just political solution is absolutely necessary for sustainable peace. We also believe that we need to deal justly and wisely with the painful issues of our divided past to ensure that there is lasting national reconciliation. In partnership with our many local level partner organizations and with our donors, this is the work with people that NPC has been doing and continues to do for 22 years now. The projects we implement and the activities we undertake reflect this commitment.





*National  
Peace Council of  
Sri Lanka*

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