

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2021



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

**National Peace Council of Sri Lanka**





## VISION

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

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## MISSION

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

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## About NPC

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

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

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



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## Programme Advisor

Ms. Sumadhu Weerawarne Perera

## Staff Members

Dr. Jehan Perera	Executive Director
Ms. Chithrupa Vidanapathirana	Manager Administration
Mr. Robinson Thevasagayam	Manager Finance
Mr. Saman Seneviratne	Project Manager
Ms. Venuri De Silva	Project Manager
Mr. Nishantha Kumara	Project Manager (until January)
Ms. Rasika Seneviratne	Assistant Project Manager
Mr. Nagaratnam Vijayakantan	Associate Manager
Ms. Nirosha Anthony	Associate Manager
Mr. Samsudeen Safi Nayaj	Project Coordinator
Mr. Nuwan Pradeep Subasinghe	Project Coordinator (until August)
Mr. A. K. S. M. Yushri	Assistant Project Coordinator
Ms. Yashoda Piyumali	Assistant Project Coordinator
Mr. Shantha D. Pathirana	Senior Project Officer
Mr. Uwais Mohamed	Senior Project Officer
Ms. Kaushalya Weerakoon	Senior Project Officer
Mr. G. Wotkinson	Senior Project Officer
Mr. Lakshan Perera	Senior Project Officer
Mr. Sanka Galagoda	M & E Coordinator (until July)
Ms. L. W. N. Vishaka	Assistant M & E Coordinator
Ms. Gayathri Sebaratnam	Assistant M & E officer
Ms. W. A. D. T. Dilrukshi	Accounts Officer
Mr. Maduranga Dias	Accounts Officer
Ms. Gayathri Selvagumar	Accounts Officer (until April)
Ms. Ashoka Kumari Weerasinghe	Accounts Officer
Ms. S. Ramya	Accounts Officer (joined June)
Mr. Anton Medosan Perera	Project Officer
Ms. Ayesha Jayawardhana	Project Officer
Ms. Salome De Silva	Project Officer
Ms. S. V. P. Sepalika	Project Officer
Mr. A. N. Madushanka	Project Officer
Ms. D. G. I. Udulanayani	Project Officer
Ms. P. M. M. S. H. Pathiraja	Project Officer
Mr. S. Kamaladasan	Project Officer
Ms. Charuni Ruwanari	Project Officer (until June)
Ms. Wathsala Samarasinghe	Project Officer (until June)
Ms. Anojitha Sivaskaran	Project Officer (until November)
Ms. H. M. G. P. K. Herath	Admin Officer
Mr. Haritha Wickramasinghe	Project Officer (joined August)
Ms. Shanthakumar Janani Saranya	Admin Officer (until June)
Mr. Sumudu Jayasooriya	Administration Associate
Mr. S. Meril Karunajeewa	Administration Associate
Mr. Sarath Karunarathne	Administration Associate
Ms. Asenika Madurangani	Office Aide

# 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 31 December 2021. Our vision of a peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka in which freedom, human rights and democratic governance of all communities are respected has been consistent since we launched NPC in 1995.

However, during the year under review, in formulating NPCs Strategic Framework 2022-2025, changes were made in articulating our Vision, Mission and Long-term Goal. The Vision now reads, 'A peaceful and just country, in which freedom, human and democratic rights of all people are assured.' The Mission statement reads as follows: To work in partnership with different target groups to educate, mobilize and advocate to build a society of rights conscious citizens and a political culture that enables a political solution to the ethnic conflict and provides equal opportunities for all.'

However, NPC while standing by its original commitment and foundation, will continue to find solutions to root causes for violence and conflicts that the war, which ended in 2009, did not address. In essence NPC will take a pragmatic approach in dealing with issues realistically, and based on practical rather than theoretical considerations, but in ways that suit current and emerging realities. Further, the mandate of NPC will remain valid as peaceful coexistence and ethnic reconciliation still largely remain elusive in Sri Lanka.

NPC is well positioned in the Sri Lankan polity as a national NGO with considerable respect earned from international funding partners and local stakeholders in promoting peaceful coexistence through a host of strategically planned activities. NPC is committed to organizing its project portfolio and proposed activities in relation to four broad thematic pillars, namely: 1. State formation as pluralistic norm and practice; 2. Enabling environment where rule of law operates as a norm; 3. Trust and understanding among groups for shared space; 4. Socio-economic justice across different groups.

In implementing several projects NPC will remain mindful of cross-cutting themes, which are additional issues or areas that intersect with project activities, which can be easily integrated into projects without losing focus of the main goal. The three themes identified are, Gender Justice and Empowerment of Women, Youth Empowerment, and Evidence-based Narratives targeting policy and systems of State and its attitudes. In order to complement cross-cutting themes a range of cross-cutting functions already practiced by NPC will be continued in the future, which include networking and CSO partnerships, Communication, advocacy, capacity building and research.

2021 was a year in which Sri Lanka was attempting to recover from the pandemic that caused immense economic and political instability. It was an extremely challenging year with an increasingly militarised, authoritarian, and majoritarian government. Throughout the year, the government continued to use the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) to arrest and detain people without trial for extended periods, being disproportionately used against Tamils and Muslims.

However, the war is now over more than 12 years and the last election was fought on promises of a restoration of law and order and the practice of discipline as being national values. The National Peace Council believes that the time for a break with the past has come. The government needs to walk its talk if it is to serve the country and the national interest.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks the continued confidence and encouragement of our many donors, the trust displayed by sections of the Government and loyalty of our many partners island wide. What NPC was able to achieve during the year under review would not have been possible without the commitment and professionalism of our Executive Director, Program Advisor, Management and Program Staff and the guidance and support of the Board of Directors and Governing Council members.

**Joe William, PhD**  
Chairperson

## **General Secretary's Message**

The year 2021 was a difficult year in which several incorrect decisions were made by the government that paved the way for the economic catastrophe that was to follow. Among these were the decisions to postpone provincial council and local government elections that would have given the government an indication of the changing mindset of the people. The change in the tax structure to please big businessmen accompanied by massive corruption led to a shortfall in government revenues.

With the overnight ban on the import of chemical fertilizers required for paddy cultivation due to the depletion of foreign exchange reserves, farming became a huge problem and the farmers were moved to protest. Moreover, the price of rice began to double and the public's favor with the government gradually began to decline.

The National Peace Council worked closely with the people and the government despite the economic hardships and provided economic relief by reallocating funds with the approval of some of our international donors. It was decided to deploy resources to provide relief to the affected people while constantly advocating for the protection of the democratic rights of all sections of the people in the country.

We all worked hard to create a better socio-economic environment by standing up for the needs of the people who are deprived of their rights in a very difficult period and pointing out the facts to the government and the people. We received various responses from the people about that. In carrying out the activities this year, our organization was able to achieve satisfactory progress.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors, the members of the Governing Council, the talented employees who fulfilled their responsibilities by devoting themselves to taking the projects to the people, and our donors who gave us support in various ways.

**G. V. D. Tilakasiri**  
Hon. General Secretary

## Treasurer's Message

The year of 2021 was very challenging with mixed attainments, Covid epidemic and associated limitation to travel and gathering reducing our field activities and programs. Despite these challenges we performed better during the year. We were able to reallocate some of the funds with permission of the donors towards financial assistance to families affected by Covid. We extend our sincere thanks to our donors for their consideration and support.

Our financial delivery improved during 2021 to Rs. 210 million, which was 30% more than the previous year. Our Financial Statement reflects the true picture of our financial performance. Our annual audit was conducted by the Ernst and Young and they issued an Unqualified Opinion. As per the auditor's opinion, our financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of National Peace council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited as of 31 December 2021.

We had taken initiatives to improve effectiveness and efficiency of our program delivery during the year under difficult circumstances. We were also concerned about the risks to staff in the field and took appropriate steps to mitigate them as required.

I take this opportunity to thank all our donors for the continued support and the trust they have placed on us. This would have not been possible without the professional performance of our staff. I thank the Governing Council and Board Members for the wholehearted support received from them.

I dedicate the success of the year to all who worked for NPC in a variety of ways and seek their support in the years ahead.

**Prof. T. Jayasingam**

Joint Treasurer

# **Executive Director's Report**

The governmental change that took place in August 2020, in which a nationalist political formation came to power, coupled with the continuation of the Covid pandemic made civil society work difficult in the year 2021 under review in this annual report. The election of the new government on a plank of ethnic majority nationalism led to the passage of the 20th Amendment which concentrated power in the hands of the president and the security forces. There was surveillance and monitoring of civil society activities, and questioning of civil society activists by police and intelligence personnel which has an intimidating effect.

Despite these difficulties, NPC carried out a large number of activities in 2021. Some of these activities were carried online due to Covid restrictions. NPC disseminated political commentaries, newsletters and press releases that were published in the media in three languages. The material was also uploaded onto NPC's website.

**The Plural Action for Conflict Transformation (PACT)** project has aimed to mainstream the concept of pluralist coexistence within a rights framework and take it to a wider constituency. This long-term intervention, the continuation of previous interventions, is supported with funding from Misereor and supplemented with funding from Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD). During this period 25 new sub committees were set up affiliated to 17 DIRCIs in selected "hotspot" areas in each district that are susceptible to inter religious/ethnic conflict, disputes and tension. These sub committees will help develop understanding, trust and brotherhood among people in these "hotspot" areas.

**The Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom (CERF)** project has sought to sustain the space for religious freedom within an inclusive society supported by the US State Department. Enhancing the collaborative engagement of multiple sectors including religious leaders, state officials, community policing units, civil society organizations etc., the intervention established Local Inter Religious Committees (LIRC) in twelve targeted localities through a hotspot mapping survey.

**The Technical Assistance to Justice Institutions in Sri Lanka (TAJISL)** project supported by the US State Department has focused on the provision of technical assistance to both state and non-state actors and institutions. Through its training and capacitation efforts the project contributed towards improved awareness and utilization of effective prevention of hate speech practices both at the community level as well as the institutional level. The project is implemented in collaboration with Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) in 10 districts. A total of 180 Master Trainers, district coordinators and other staff attached to local partner organisations received training on hate speech through 3 training programmes.

**The Creative Youth Engagement for Pluralism (C-YEP)** project supported by SRP/GIZ capacitated selected university students in Ruhuna, Sabaragamuwa, Eastern and Jaffna universities through awareness raising to positively influence the public discourse on pluralism and inter-community relations and thereby strengthen reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Twenty-one (21) activities including a collaborative research, a research symposium, pluralism campaign for advanced level and ordinary level students, a youth survey to capture perceptions of youth on pluralism and a publication compiling research papers from student researchers were some of the activities completed. The symposium saw 30 research papers presented during a hybrid national level research symposium with 60 on-site participants and 150 virtual participants.

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) project supported by USAID strengthened Sri Lankan-led efforts to advance social cohesion and reconciliation in ten (10) districts by mobilizing and building the capacity of communities to engage in development as a means of trust building. Through all of these exercises, SCORE sought to achieve a level of cohesion and understanding across the country in state officials, civil society activists and community leaders to provide for opportunities to resolve local level problems and to share experiences. promotes language rights leading to national integration and reconciliation and assist citizens, both men and women, to communicate in official languages in three project districts.

The CSO-PVE Capacity Building in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (PVE) supported by the EU was a project that explored preventing violent extremism (PVE) in diverse contexts by engaging Sri Lankan and Bangladesh civil society organizations (CSOs) in PVE in their constituencies. The intervention, implemented with Helvetas Sri Lanka, is part of EU's support to civil society actors in promoting confidence-building and preventing radicalisation in South Asia. Project activities are centred in six districts- Ampara, Batticaloa, Kurunegala, Kandy, Mannar and Vavuniya. One of the highlights of the project saw 10 CSO representatives and NPC staff visit Bangladesh enabling an intercountry exchange of lessons and experiences.

**Language to Reconcile (L2R – NLEAP)** is a project supported by the Canadian government that has promoted language rights leading to national integration and reconciliation and assist citizens, both men and women, to communicate in official languages. A total of 9 language audits were carried out in nine state institutions in all three locations to find solutions for identified language issues within local state service delivery structures- Police, MOH Office and DS Office. NPC engaged with state institutions that were part of the language audit and supported them to resolve some of the identified issues.

**Sustaining peace through pluralism and inclusive service delivery (Freedom House)** project in partnership with Freedom House and supported by the US State Department has promoted pluralism in the process of inclusive services delivery to ensure that all communities receive inclusive services effectively and efficiently without discrimination. The project focus is twofold, to facilitate the development and offering of a certificate course through four national level universities on pluralism and inclusive services delivery, targeting front-line government officers, and second to provide sub-grants of up to one million rupees each to five district-based CBOs to implement projects that promote pluralism and ensure that inclusive services are practically delivered to the communities by linking government officers and under-privilege communities.

The Civil Peace Service project (CPS) is a programme aimed at preventing violence and promoting peace in regions affected by conflict. It is funded by the German Federal Government and implemented by German civil society organizations in cooperation with partners abroad. The focus is on organizational development, knowledge management, and results monitoring at NPC. 2021 was the third year of this project.

**Open Society Foundations (OSF)** has supported NPC to promote national reconciliation, inter-community trust building and pluralism through education, capacity building and advocacy particularly through support for strategic activities when necessary. OSF's institutional support has enabled NPC to sustain its core staff through funding gaps. The overall purpose of this grant is to enable the NPC to carry out its activities with greater flexibility in light of diminishing space for civil society engagement and diminishing donor support for central and administrative needs.

NPC is working with the University of South Carolina to strengthen its information gathering and scoping and analyses through the **Think Tank Capacity Building** project. This intervention supports capacity building of NPC staff to set in place systems for research. Several consultative meetings were carried out with this regard in 2021. A research on Sri Lankan Malaiyaha estate community members currently living in IDP camps in India and their idea of 'belonging' is planned for completion in the following year.

As an organisation facilitating organic networks at district and sub district level, it was necessary to provide support in situations of hardship and need. Following requests from its inter religious networks at district and sub district level, NPC found funds for Covid relief work through the reallocation of existing funds and by raising funds from donors including the German embassy. While relief support is crucial at this time, NPC also finds that it enables positive collaborative engagement with government agencies strengthening future engagement and access. The current economic crisis is going to make it difficult for beneficiaries to stay focused on issues of inclusion and reconciliation especially when livelihoods are challenged. Providing some level of material support within the framework of peacebuilding would be a necessary element.

**Jehan Perera**  
Executive Director



## PROJECTS



## **Plural Action for Conflict Transformation**

Plural Action for Conflict Transformation (PACT) aims to mainstream the concept of pluralist coexistence within a rights framework and take it to a wider constituency. This long-term intervention, the continuation of previous interventions, is supported with funding from Misereor and supplemented with funding from Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD). A total of 153 activities were carried out during the reporting period. The activities included a youth exchange visit to Jaffna, a virtual national level orientation meeting with all district coordinators and partners, establishing a District Inter Religious Committee in Colombo, carrying out partner assessments to identify future capacitation needs and a follow up national level meeting to share finding of the assessment, actualization activities including youth led food culture events, youth camps, silent protests, press conferences and seminars. In addition, satellite/subcommittees were set up in identified hotspot areas, and members were capacitated through a series of clustered workshops on conflict resolution and mediation. Need based capacity building workshops, trainings on NVC, PVE, hate speech and social media for youth leaders, meetings with government officials and other relevant stakeholders to support NPC's Covid 19 relief program and community engagement meetings completed the combo of activities in the PACT intervention.

### **Highlights & achievements:**

- District inter religious network expanded to 17 districts, with the establishment of one in Colombo. The Colombo DIRC is particularly significant because within its membership are Buddhist prelates holding key positions in two principal Buddhist sects- Amarapura and Ramanna and the former Bishop of the Methodist Church. Colombo is also the most populous district in the country the centre of governmental power and commerce.
- An exposure visit from the south to the north for bridge building between communities, resulted in new friendships being forged. These relations have continued via a WhatsApp group where youth members continue to exchange ideas on reconciliation and share news from their work. A group of 22 youth from multiple districts in the south, 24 members of the Galle DIRC and 6 religious' leaders from the Colombo DIRC joined the visit.
- During the exposure visit, Galle DIRC members and other well-wishers from Galle donated school supplies to the Paramankirai Primary School in Kilinochchi.
- 7 food culture appreciation events carried out with the participation of 660 community members including 300 females to improve co-existence, especially among youth from different ethnic communities by showcasing pluralistic aspects in Sri Lankan food culture.
- 240 key persons, including religious leaders, government officials, community leaders, women and youth participate in an online campaign/webinar on child rights protection as part of advocacy subsequent to the untimely death of an underaged child worker from the estate sector.
- 150 religious leaders and community leaders from 17 districts participated in a virtual National Inter Religious Committee meeting to remember victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks and appreciate the continuous work of Christian leaders for their role in stabilizing the country post Easter attacks.

- 400 persons took part in a webinar to celebrate International Day of Peace. An information session on the importance of peace in the south Asian region and threats faced as a result of destabilization of power in Afghanistan was the topic of discussion. Senior lecturer in International Relations at the University of Colombo shared a comprehensive analysis of the situation from a geo political perspective.



- 25 sub committees in total were set up affiliated to 17 DIRCs in selected "hotspot" areas in each district that are susceptible to inter religious/ethnic conflict, disputes and tension. These sub committees will help develop understanding, trust and brotherhood among people in these "hotspot" areas. Members were capacitated on conflict resolution, mediation and other qualities necessary for them to become successful community mediators.



- 250 persons attend a series of virtual public discussions on current issues particularly relating to reconciliation, civic space and environment rights carried out through the DIRC network by NPC. Among the speakers were former editor of the Ravaya newspaper- Victor Ivan and head of the Walpola Rahula Institute- Ven Galkande Dhammananda thera. The Colombo DIRC played a central role to educate the public and create awareness on ongoing issues in the country.



- 8 million rupees worth Covid relief negotiated by NPC in discussion with donor Misereor by repurposing funds from the ongoing PACT project to support relief activities in 29 locations across 24 districts in the country. These include the provision of sanitation items (sinks, spray machines, PPE kits) to government sector institutions especially those engaged in service delivery and provide food support to marginalised communities. Items distributed included 75 litres of hand sanitizer, 125 spray machines, 215 sinks, 4,884 PPE kits, and 1,990 dry ration packs.

## **Key highlights for 2022**

- 15 one day capacitation training programs carried out for existing DIRCs.
- 7 meetings carried out to set up Sub Committees (Satellite Committees) and orient members on the intervention.
- 6 two-day clustered residential training programs for Sub Committees completed.
- 35 actualization activities, 2 in each location, with all targeted groups carried out.
- 52 facilitative meetings carried out for DIRCs and Steering Committees.
- 36 facilitative meetings with Sub Committees held.
- 651 youth leaders capacitated on NVC, PVE and hate speech through 17 district based two-day residential training programmes.
- 17 district based one day trainings on social cohesion for youth leaders from the districts carried out.
- 13 community engagement meetings held.
- 18 one day training programmes on pluralism held for women local government authority members and women community leaders.
- 18 one day trainings on roles and responsibilities of state officers and public representatives, pluralism, RTI, human rights and fundamental rights etc., carried out for members of sub national state administration (central government at district and sub district level/provincial government/local government).
- 1 online progress review meeting held for all local partners and DIRCs.
- 16 facilitative meetings for youth and women leaders held.
- 1 National Inter Religious Committee meeting held.

## Impact story:

### North-South bridge building for reconciliation

In February 2021, NPC organized an exposure visit from southern Sri Lanka to Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts in the north through its PACT intervention. This was carried out with the aim to build bridges of friendship between the north and south and expand the discourse on reconciliation and peace. A group of 22 Galle DIRC members, 22 youth leaders representing the national network of DIRCs and 6 religious leaders from the Colombo DIRC took part.



A notable achievement of this activity was the donation of school supplies to 160 school age children belonging to low-income families living in the Paramankirai village in the Kilinochchi district. Funds amounting to Rs 300,000 was raised by members of the Galle DIRC and other community-based philanthropists in the district. This effort was realized in part, on account of the friendship between Mr. Tharmarajah of the Jaffna DIRC and Karunathunga Welikala of the Galle DIRC, who met each other first through DIRC activities in 2010 – 2012. Since then, they have continued to engage and organize visits to the north and south to enable people from different ethnic/religious backgrounds to understand the other. Due to their continuous and untiring efforts, many people who had not previously travelled to the other location, were able to see a different part of the country.

During the exposure visit, the group from the south were welcomed at the Sri Naga Vihara temple in Jaffna by members of the Jaffna DIRC and chief incumbent of the temple, Ven. Meegahajadure Sirivimala thera. The group visited the Nallur Kandasami Kovil and afterwards travelled to the Paramankirai Primary School in the Kilinochchi district to gift school supplies to children of families affected by the now concluded war. These communities live in Paramankirai, Wettukadu and Willadi villages in the Paramankirai Grama Niladhari division of the Poonerin Divisional Secretariat Division in Kilinochchi.

Continuing the mission to build bridges, the group next proceeded to Navakkuli College for a friendly Volleyball match between youth from the south and a youth group from Jaffna, who played in mixed teams. It was interesting as well as entertaining to see how players worked together seamlessly to play the game and win the match despite a language barrier. The fact that they were religiously and ethnically different made no difference to the players as they worked together as a team. At the end of the match, the youth were seen exchanging telephone numbers with each other, which they later used to create a WhatsApp group called "Sanhindiya Sancharaya – Yapanaya" (Reconciliation visit - Jaffna). Exchanges on this group continues to date, showcasing that many bridges were built during the visit. The exposure visit ended with the group visiting the famed Nagadeepa Temple.

## Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka initiated a five-year-long intervention, **Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom (CERF)** in 2017 to sustain the space for religious freedom within an inclusive society supported by the US State Department. During this intervention, CERF established and empowered inclusive community decision-making platforms to create citizen-driven initiatives to address core drivers of religious tension across divided communities. Enhancing the collaborative engagement of multiple sectors including religious leaders, state officials, community policing units, civil society organizations etc., the intervention established Local Inter Religious Committees (LIRC) in twelve targeted localities through a hotspot mapping survey. While capacitating knowledge and improving attitudes and skills of committee members, the project significantly contributed towards increasing constructive community engagement. This was made possible through capacitization trainings, community dialogues, advocacy campaigns, issue addressing initiatives, consultations, cohesion activities, and inter-religious exposure visits targeting committee members and the public. NPC continues to empower LIRCs to take ownership of sustaining the discourse on religious freedom/coexistence using multiple approaches.



### Highlights & achievements:

#### Capacitated LIRC platforms:

- 12 localized platforms - Local Inter Religious Committees (LIRC) set up and continue to actively engage on localized issues of tension in 12 localities in 11 districts in the country.
- 588 multi ethnic/religious leaders, divisional level administrators/officers, community police officers, community leaders in LIRCs work together to resolve issues of religious/ethnic tension in their localities.
- 25 thematic trainings on religious freedom, pluralism, gender, non-violent communication, facilitation and mediation, early warning and conflict analysis, community policing, rule of law carried out for LIRCs.
- 70 multi ethnic/religious leaders took part in inter district exchange visits.
- 110 multi religious leaders exchange ideas for cohesive engagement among different communities.

#### Community police members in targeted localities trained:

- 800 members of Divisional Community Policing Sub Committees/Mother Committees capacitation on religious freedom and rule of law and pluralism.

## National Peace Council of Sri Lanka

### Successful virtual/hybrid trainings:

- 115 online/hybrid training sessions and meetings carried out for LIRCs and communities during Covid 19 pandemic related closures.
- 480 LIRC members and 500 community members reached through online platforms.

### LIRCs as conflict mitigators:

- 8 issues of religious/ethnic tension identified and addressed by LIRCs with support from NGOs/CBOs and community police in their localities.
- 4 community cohesion activities carried out to enhance community engagement.
- 22 advocacy campaigns including interfaith discussions and awareness sessions meetings carried out by LIRCs.
- 1 exchange visit was carried out with the participation of 70 religious leaders.

### Contributing to national processes and engaging with national and sub national policymakers:

- 24 meetings with sub national and national-level policymakers carried out to share recommendations of LIRC platforms on non-recurrence of religion-based violence.

### Set up NGO Network for religious freedom:

- 48 NGO network members capacitated and enabled as trainers through ToT on pluralism.
- 13 community-based follow-on activities implemented by NGO network members in their localities.

### Supporting local partners:

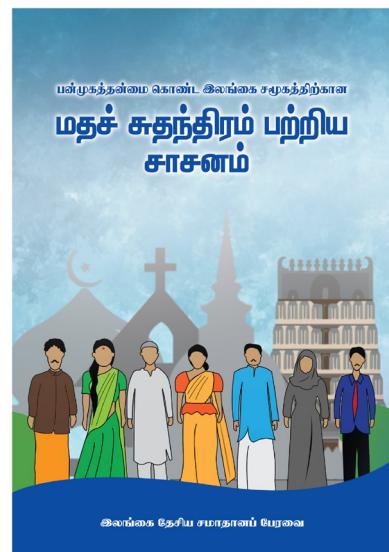
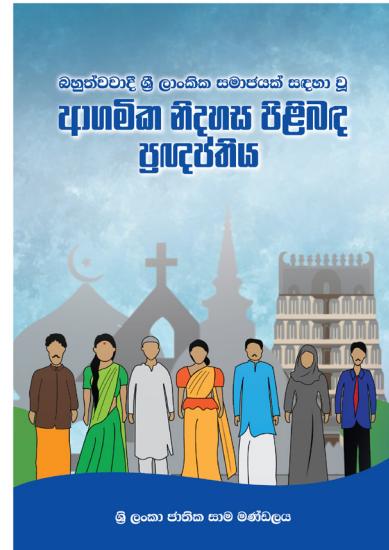
- 12 local partner organisations received equipment support to set up and manage online/hybrid training platforms

### Outreach and communication:

- 1 charter on religious freedom collating input from 413 LIRC members and 233 other senior religious leaders and community leaders in DIRCs (District Inter Religious Committees set up by NPC) published.

### Special Covid relief work (with funding from Misereor, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) and the German Embassy in Colombo):

- 776 low income earning families in 12 LIRC locations supported with LIRC members taking self-ownership of Covid 19 related relief efforts.



- 13 children's homes, 18 elders' homes, 5 intermediate care centers, 7 educational institutions received Covid relief support distributed through LIRC platforms.
- 1,626 PPE kits, 60 wash basins/sinks and 88 disinfectant spray machines provided to state and multi religious institutions in 12 LIRC locations.

## Key highlights for 2022

- 218 community police mother and subcommittee members capacitated on rule of law and pluralism contributing to improving knowledge, attitudes and skills of these committees. This training will build their competencies to mitigate possible religious conflicts within their local communities.
- 189 community police coordinating officers capacitated on rule of law and religious freedom through 3 collaborative national level trainings carried out in partnership with the Community Policing Unit of the Sri Lanka Police Department.
- 3 issue addressing interventions to address existing community tension that can lead to ethnic and religious conflict in Akurana and Trincomalee carried out. Parties who have different beliefs met on one platform to solve their issues and create a dialogue through peaceful negotiations.
- 3 cohesion initiatives in Akurana and Weligama to carried out to strengthen social cohesion and direct LIRC members and other community members to acknowledge the diversity and pluralistic nature of society.
- 2 advocacy campaigns launched via two radio programs in Vavuniya and Mannar and addressed the larger community through these new media platforms. LIRC's engagement with new media and online platforms is a value-added element to the project.
- 108 LIRC members including 34 religious leaders participated in an exposure visit to develop interconnections, shared project successes, collectively recalled past traumatic experiences while engaging with victim families/survivors of the Easter Sunday attack.
- 485 religious leaders, state officials, community leaders and invited guests reached through a virtual/hybrid national symposium. A charter of Religious Freedom within a pluralistic society was launched at the event. Stories of impact were shared to collectively review progress of the project and to recognize the contribution of the intervention to establishing an inclusive society, where religious freedom is a given right for all communities.



## Impact story:

### Solving issues through non-violent communication

Karisal is a village where historically disputes have emerged due to its multi-religious nature. In November 2021, the Mannar LIRC took an initiative to address ongoing ethnic tension between two villages- known as Sinna Karisal and Periya Karisal. Sinna Karisal is a village where a Catholic majority lives while Muslims are a majority in Periya Karisal. The issue between the two villages was based on ownership of a piece of land that is claimed by both villages. As what happens to a majority of issues in the country, this too was blown out of proportion by giving it an ethno-religious undertone. In the long term, a simple civic issue over land became a dispute between two religious groups in the village with Muslims and Catholics engaging in targeted violence. This is identified as one of the most contentious issues in Mannar with over 10 legal cases being filed, over time.

This situation somewhat changed after the Easter Sunday Attacks as a general decline in violence was noted in and around Mannar as a result of heightened security following the attacks. The Mannar LIRC identified this transition period as the best opportunity to initiate community-level dialogues to mitigate possible religion-based conflicts. On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, the LIRC carried out separate dialogues for both villages facilitated by NPC and local partner CCT (Center for Communication Training) and key persons in both villages. During the dialogue, the facilitators discussed the importance of solving issues through a non-violent approach and avoiding negative consequences of violence. The facilitators explained that unity among both villages will ensure a win-win for both sides that are involved in the dispute. The facilitators encouraged the communities to collectively resolve their problems in a non-violent manner with empathy and compassion.

During the dialogue, Gnanasekaram Justin discussed the importance of negotiations to resolve issues. "NPC created a platform for all of us to discuss these matters and now they have shown us that we should peacefully resolve our issues". Ilaiyathambi Siddeeq said that mutual understanding is a key factor to solve issues. At the end of the dialogue, possible solutions were suggested by participants to strengthen unity in both villages. For instance, a proposal was put forward to hold awareness raising sessions on positive attitudes and behavior among youth and other key decision-makers in the villages.

Following several important decisions taken during community dialogues, awareness sessions were carried out for Muslim youth in Periya Karisal, who were identified as the chief instigators of violent incidents, to ensure the non-recurrence of conflicts. They received capacitation on the importance of negotiating rather than using violence.



During subsequent follow-up sessions to gauge progress, it was revealed that violence between parties had somewhat decreased. Religious leaders in both villages attributed this to facilitation created for continued engagement between communities through the CERF intervention. Maulvi Najeem Kaleel in Periya Karisal says, "Continued violence between our two villages was rising and Muslims were the most aggressive party in this dispute. We have had many groups trying to intervene in this issue, but this is the

*first time we have seen a visible outcome. Since the intervention by NPC, no violent incidents have been reported and I observe a positive change among Muslim youth. I know several cases continue in court, but this program has reduced incidents of violence among youth.”.*

Rev. Father Nimal Koonge in Sinna Karisal further explained how the intervention contributed to reducing the violence. *“This program strategically addressed the minds of youth, by teaching them to be compassionate to the other’s issues. I appreciate how it inspired these youth groups to become mediators who resolve conflicts. After the intervention, no violence has been reported. I see that now youth are believing we should resolve our issues in a non-violent manner.”.*

The importance of negotiating and mutual understanding among communities was recognized by both parties for sustaining peace in the area. The intervention provided a platform to discuss and understand the situation while enabling them to use non-violent approaches to solve their issues.

## Technical Assistance to Justice Institutions in Sri Lanka

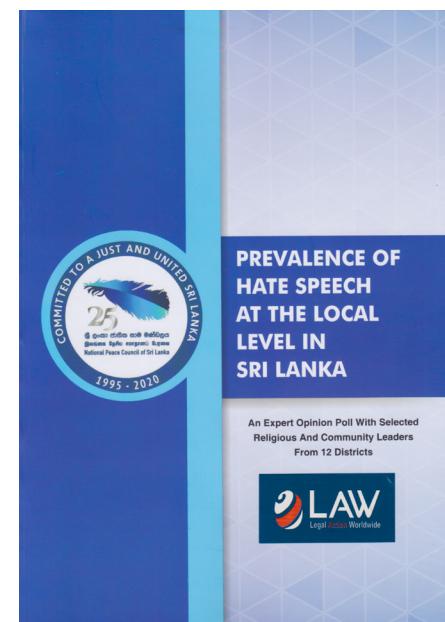
Technical Assistance to Justice Institutions in Sri Lanka (TAJISL) project focuses on the provision of technical assistance to both state and non-state actors and institutions. Through its training and capacitation efforts the project contributed towards improved awareness and utilization of effective prevention of hate speech practices both at the community level as well as the institutional level. The project is implemented in collaboration



with Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) in 10 districts- Anuradhapura, Badulla, Polonnaruwa, Kalutara, Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Matara, Monaragala, and Ratnapura. The 'Master Trainers' trained previously through the project continued to support community mobilization and capacitation of the public through community level training and awareness raising interventions. During this reporting period, they successfully carried out awareness raising interventions for grassroot level communities and for state and policy level actors and institutions. Through its capacitation efforts, the project also created an inclusive platform for dialogue on local issues.

### Highlights & achievements:

- 180 Master Trainers, district coordinators and other staff attached to local partner organisations received training on hate speech through 3 training programmes.
- 1265 individuals including religious leaders, state officials, members of local government authorities, journalists, civil society leaders and youth received a combined 31 trainings on prevention of hate speech. All trainings were facilitated by the 'Master Trainers'.
- 340 religious' leaders, community leaders, government officials, local government authorities and youth participated in a survey on perceptions of hate speech in 10 districts including in the north and east with support from the Social Scientists' Association who trained the cadre of Master Trainers as enumerators to carry out the survey. The survey results continue to be shared widely.
- 100,000 face masks were distributed with NPC branding in 29 locations across 24 districts targeting state officials working in service delivery and school students. To align with the objectives of this project, the masks carried the 'No hate speech' sign.



- 130,000 reached through 2 campaigns on countering hate speech, that targeted youth of the University of Peradeniya and social media. The month-long campaign was designed to reach a large audience through social media platforms where Hate Speech is widely prevalent.
  - 1,000 persons reached through campaigns on prevention of hate speech in Kegalle and Monaragala districts. In Kegalle, estate sector workers who are considered a marginalized community were capacitated with information of human rights and adverse effects of hate speech while in Moneragala the campaign targeted local religious leaders and school children.

## **Key highlights for 2022**

- 10 championship events on prevention of hate speech carried out in project locations- Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kurunegala, Kandy, Badulla, Monaragala, Matara, Kalutara, Rathnapura, and Kegalle. The final championship event was carried out with the participation of national-level political actors, religious leaders, state officials, local government authority members, youth leaders, representatives of civil society organisations, and artists. The event served as a platform for all who engaged in the event to learn from each other's experiences, bringing together all of them into the national dialogue on the prevention of hate speech.



## Impact story:

### Making of a Master Trainer - story of Rahul Piyadigama, Badulla

Rahul Piyadigama is a 23-year-old second-year student at the University of Kelaniya and a Master Trainer from Badulla. He shares his story on how he became a Master Trainer and developed skills as a resource person.



"Our district partner in Badulla identified me as a potential person to become a Master Trainer in 2019 but I was hesitant because of my age and lack of experience. I was persuaded by our district partner to reconsider and take up the challenge to become a trainer/facilitator. I took this as a challenge and worked hard to absorb the information. NPC offered many capacity building programs including ToTs, follow up sessions and shared resource material and web links to enhance our knowledge. These capacitation programmes were significant to build my role as a Master Trainer.

Although I am from the Badulla district, through a chance happening, I was able to facilitate a virtual training program in Kegalle. I used the skills and knowledge what I had received only recently, to facilitate the training program to the best of my ability.

In the end, there was positive feedback from all participants. They appreciated my presentation skills and methods. This boosted my sense of self.

A few days later, I received a call from an officer attached to the Kegalle Divisional Secretariat, who had observed my presentation. He asked me if I would like conduct a training program for their front-line staff on "Prevention of Hate Speech". I was surprised and yet very happy as the request had come from a government officer. I accepted his request immediately and started to prepare for the training programme.

I passed this information to NPC and my district coordinating partner. They liaised with the Kegalle Divisional Secretary and assisted me to complete the training programme. The positive feedback that I received after the training made me understand that I did my training well. This helped me become more confident. Now I concentrate on developing additional knowledge and skills and try to use this to train others."

## Creative Youth Engagement for Pluralism

Creative Youth Engagement for Pluralism (C-YEP) is a project that capacitated selected university students in Ruhuna, Sabaragamuwa, Eastern and Jaffna universities through awareness raising to positively influence the public discourse on pluralism and inter-community relations and thereby strengthen reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Twenty-one (21) activities including a collaborative research, a research symposium, pluralism campaign for advanced level and ordinary level students, a youth survey to capture perceptions of youth on pluralism and a publication compiling research papers from student researchers were some of the activities completed. The intervention was supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and concluded during this reporting period.



### Highlights & achievements:

- 30 research papers presented during a hybrid national level research symposium with 60 on-site participants and 150 virtual participants. The research papers were presented under categories as pluralism and inter-community relations, peacebuilding and conflict transformation by student researchers from four local universities - University of Jaffna, University of Ruhuna, Eastern University and Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. Foreign Minister Prof G. L. Peiris participated as chief guest.
- Published a compilation of 30 research papers by student researchers from four universities titled Plural Sri Lanka: Exploring paths to reconciliation (in Sinhala, Tamil and English).
- Carried out survey on Youth Knowledge, Attitudes and Perception on Pluralism and Inter-community relations in Sri Lanka with the Social Scientists' Association to understand perceptions of youth on the idea of pluralism. The research report was published as, "Youth and Pluralism in Sri Lanka: Opportunities and challenges".
- Supported collaborative research by four state universities- Ruhuna, Sabaragamuwa, Eastern and Jaffna - on the language for reconciliation and produced the Lexicon of Peace: People's understanding of peacebuilding language, which looks at how people of different ethnicities and religions understand the same words and concepts.



## National Peace Council of Sri Lanka

- 1747 Ordinary Level (O/L) and Advanced Level (A/L) students (754 Sinhala medium students and 993 Tamil medium students) in 29 locations across 24 districts received support through the national campaign on pluralistic coexistence 'Amanthra'. The support extended included learning material, while providing knowledge and guidance on mindful citizenship within a shared space.
- 4 skill building trainings to capacitate 140 university students on necessary skills to live in a pluralistic society carried out.
- 4 thematic trainings focused on capacitating university students on research, video making, debate and drama to introduce the importance of pluralism and inter-community relations. In view of the Covid 19 pandemic, the session on drama was converted to creative writing.
- 13 actualization initiatives including 4 inter-university debate competitions, 4 video productions, 20 research studies from four universities and 1 publication of creative writings produced.

### **Special event:**

#### *Exploring Paths to Reconciliation*

Ideally speaking governmental decision making needs to be pluralistic on both symbolic and substantive matters of importance to the minority communities. More often than not this has not been the case due to the structures of the state failing to discourage ethnic majoritarianism whether at the central level or provincial level. There is the need for a new understanding of democracy as being a consultative process with all of the citizenry and not just with the majority who have voted the government to power. It is this unresolved problem that has made the minorities question their status in the country which needs to be resolved early for the progress of the country.

Under its project Creative Youth Engagement for Pluralism NPC, with support from the Strengthening Reconciliation Processes programme of the EU and GIZ (Germany), brought together students from the Eastern, Jaffna, Ruhuna and Sabaragamuwa universities. More than 160 undergraduates from the four universities obtained awareness and organised their own debate competitions and artistic events on themes that centred around the concept of pluralism.

A conference was organized on the theme of Plural Sri Lanka: Different Paths to Reconciliation at which 30 research papers were presented, written mostly by undergraduate students and a few by faculty members on a variety of topics including peacebuilding and reconciliation, pluralism, conflict

and conflict resolution. They provided testimony to the peace formation that takes place at the local level by civic actors who are engaged in pluralist and grounded actions even at a time when the macro political actors may not be prepared for the compromises necessary for reconciliation.

At the conference, Foreign Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris, who was invited to deliver the closing address, answered questions





from the floor on the concept of one country, one law. He stated that the purpose was not to eliminate personal laws but to ensure that rights were protected in a universal manner applicable to all citizens. The principle of one law prevailed as parliament was the supreme law-making body. He also added that the government was committed to a process of reconciliation and did not consider NGOs to be enemies but as organizations that had a wealth of experience in working with people and possessing wide networks of influence.

There is a need for this holistic thinking to be taken on by the government as a whole and not only by a section.

"Language is a huge bridge why one person does not know about the other. It is young people who are in universities and schools who should be guided to build peace in Sri Lanka. If we have to make a reality of pluralism, I would suggest that we work in different fields; that we need to work on educational, social and political connectivity" Prof. Peiris said.

Other speakers at the conference included Mr Thorsten Bargfrede, Chargé de Affaires of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives; Dr. Ahilan Kadirgamar, senior lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Jaffna; and Prof. Premakumara De Silva, Representative of the Chairman, University Grant Commission as well as vice chancellors, academics and researchers of University of Jaffna, Eastern University, University of Ruhuna and University of Sabaragamuwa.

Mr. Bargfrede said that the EU was formed as a peacebuilding project after Europe had experienced centuries of warfare and resolved that it should end for all time after the Second World War. He said the EU was committed to working closely with civil society and the government to support greater understanding of each other within the country and by understanding to build a future together.

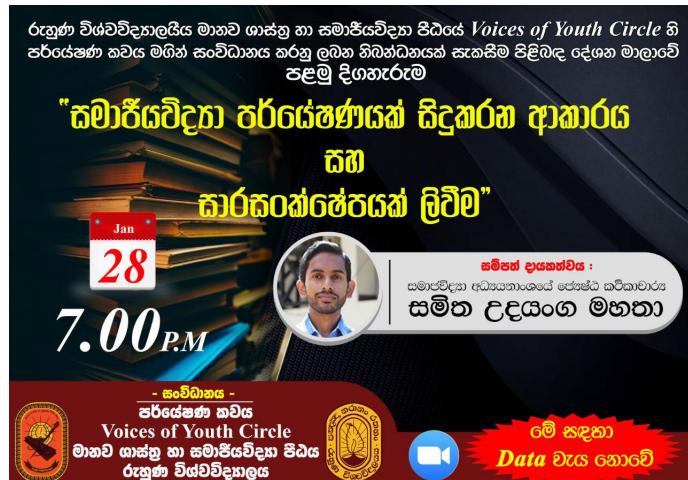
Nicolas Lamade, who heads the GIZ-Strengthening Reconciliation Processes (SRP) programme, complimented the students on the research they had done and said, "This is courageous work and a bold mindset to have. It is this kind of moral courage and open-minded spirit of inquiry that a country seeks from its academic community."



## Impact story:

## **"Voice of Youth" for continued engagement on pluralism**

Student beneficiaries from the University of Ruhuna trained through the C-YPE intervention established a student circle- "Voice of Youth" to share their learning with other/new students. This was set up as a non-curricular activity of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Through this initiative, trained students will continue to create awareness on pluralism and inter-community relations among university students by sharing skills on research methods, videography, debate and communications/creative writing. The first committee of the student circle- "Voice of Youth" was made up of trained students of monthly online and onsite sessions under each



"Becoming part of the C-YEP project was a great opportunity. We have not just learned about pluralism and inter-community relations, but also about values in our daily lives, skills to support future careers and a foundation to work together. When we were first capacitated through C-YEP, only a group of 35 students were able to participate in the initial training. The knowledge gained through C-YEP was too important to keep within a small circle of 35! So we decided to share it with other interested students. After a series of discussions, the trained group of students decided to establish the youth circle with support from our university coordinator and the head of the Department of Public Policy, Renuka Priyantha. With his support, we were able to establish the student circle and we will continue to disseminate the knowledge that we learned through the intervention with other university youth. **Dhanuka Edirisooriya, group leader, student circle- "Voice of Youth", University of Ruhuna.**

## Civil Peace Service project

Civil Peace Service project (CPS) is a programme aimed at preventing violence and promoting peace in regions affected by conflict. It is funded by the German Federal Government and implemented by German civil society organizations in cooperation with partners abroad. The CPS programme mainly funds the contribution of German or international experts (CPS workers) to partner organizations according to their particular needs. The project at hand is a cooperation between NPC and Agiamondo, a Catholic organization.



The focus is on organizational development, knowledge management, and results monitoring at NPC. 2021 is the third year of this project.

### Highlights & achievements:

- 36 staff members participated in a 2-day residential training on how to facilitate dialogue. At the participatory workshop, NPC project teams discussed the challenges faced when animating participants to share their experiences and thoughts about potentially fraught subjects, and to listen to others do the same. On the second day, participants learned about different methods of facilitating such dialogue through dramatic arts, and their applicability in different contexts and with different beneficiary groups. The programme was carried out by Sulochana Dissanayake of Power of Play who used a well formulated training curricula for building empathy/learning emotions etc. through creative methods that included puppetry, drawing and performing.
- 2-day workshop on video production carried out for NPC project staff. This programme was initiated to build on knowledge acquired in a previous CPS project workshop. Project staff were given knowledge and space to come up with their own ideas for short videos with the aim to publish them on NPC social media channels.
- 12 selected project staff received specialised training through a mini workshop on "Introduction to video editing" held at NPC. They were given knowledge on basic principles of video editing and practical use of video editing software and how to edit short videos. It is envisaged that trained staff will be able to edit videos produced through their respective projects. The training was carried out by documentary filmmaker and photographer Sharni Jayawardene.
- 35 staff participated in a 2-day residential training on monitoring methods. Participants received capacitation on monitoring frameworks, and existing and new monitoring methods. Israel based expert Nivine Sandouka delivered an online deep dive session into monitoring frameworks that are used in development and peacebuilding while on the second day Sri Lankan sociologist Shashik Silva gave an introduction to quantitative and qualitative

research methods. The importance of indicators, existing monitoring methods and necessary improvements were discussed.

- 4 half-day online training sessions on "How to conduct effective online training programs" were carried out to train staff to continue project activities even during the Covid lockdown situation in the country. Participants were given technical knowhow on how to conduct online education and how to create an enjoyable and captivating online learning/training environment. The programme was conducted by Bjorn Eser, a well-known trainer and motivational speaker from Germany. The sessions were cofacilitated by a digital teaching and learning technologist from Sri Lanka.
- 40 staff members received training on gender and peacebuilding through a residential workshop. They were capacitated on participatory methods when carrying out gender and peacebuilding training and the applicability of different methods for diverse target groups. The gender training was carried out by Sri Lankan gender specialist Velusami Weerasingham and the participatory workshop on peacebuilding was carried out by Romania based expert- Ruxandra S. Tanase.
- 45 staff members, NPC Board Directors and Governing Council members participated in a residential training/event to build solidarity. This included a hike to the Kottawa forest reserve located in the southern region of the country and activities to enhance team spirit and a quiz programme.
- 50 local partner organisation members including the head and a key staff member took part in a two-day residential consultation to discuss NPC policies including the Code of Conduct, which was re-introduced along with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies. All partner organization signed the NPC Code of Conduct. The Complaints Management Policy was introduced to partner organisations followed by a discussion.
- The Administrative, Finance and Human Resource manual of NPC was reviewed and revised in consultation with an experienced organization.
- Under organizational development, CPS funded the setting up of a Microsoft cloud account for NPC and migrated the existing email system to the Microsoft 365 platform. Microsoft 365 provides a wide range of extra features, including cloud storage, and admin components- leave approval, travel request, central calendar etc. have been centralized to a single platform
- 1450 families from 29 locations across 24 districts received food support from Agiamondo through the CPS project during the Covid 19 pandemic, which was a crucial need in the country.
- 870 Ordinary Level (O/L) students from 29 locations received educational support through the CPS project.



## **Key highlights for 2022:**

- 30 staff members were capacitated on processes and tools that are used to measure results, outcomes and the success of interventions through a 3-day residential training. Participants also received training on how to develop a M&E framework for projects. Staff realized the value of measuring progress of work through these techniques. The programme was conducted by two M&E experts attached to the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEvA).
- 12 staff members received training on the use of video/camera equipment to capture project activities clearly. Instructions included basic functions on how equipment work including dismantling and assembling, different types of lenses, balancing colour and light, and general maintenance of equipment.
- 30 project staff members participated in a residential training to enhance knowledge on social media outreach and related social media tools by social media expert group Hashtag Generation. The main expectation of this workshop was to improve social media skills of NPC staff, specifically on using Facebook and YouTube efficiently for project activities.
- 35 staff, Board and Governing Council members participated in a discussion on the current economic situation in Sri Lanka and its long-term impact on peace and reconciliation work in the country. During the session, Dr. Ahilan Kadirgamar, who has extensive knowledge on north based cooperative societies, shared his views based on facts and data.

## Social Cohesion and Reconciliation

**Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE)** strengthened Sri Lankan-led efforts to advance social cohesion and reconciliation in ten (10) districts by mobilizing and building the capacity of communities to engage in development as a means of trust building. This intervention supported by Global Communities, faced difficulties when carrying out some of the anticipated activities due to Covid



restrictions. The project significantly contributed to enhancing the attitudes and knowledge of local government authority representatives and state officials to build coalitions for a positive change. Through all of these exercises, SCORE sought to achieve a level of cohesion and understanding across the country in state officials, civil society activists and community leaders to provide for opportunities to resolve local level problems and to share experiences. The project completed module-based trainings on Non-Discriminatory Customer Service and several regional symposia. In addition, trainings on resilient communities through everyday democracy were carried out for coexistent society members and consultative meetings to plan need based initiatives were held. A case studies publication capturing project success was also produced.

### Highlights & achievements:

- A module on 'Non-discriminatory Customer Service' was developed following the findings of the Everyday Peace Indicators research carried out by the United States Institute of Peace targeting state officials and local government authority representatives to enhance inclusive service practices in the service delivery sector.
- 18 module-based trainings on Non-Discriminatory Customer Service carried out for 357 service delivery officials in state institutions and 192 local government representatives in 10 locations to improve their knowledge of inclusive customer service practices to provide inclusive service delivery to the public service sector.
- 365 co-existence society members were capacitated to take the lead in local reconciliation mechanisms through 13 trainings on 'Resilient Communities through Everyday Democracy'. Each training was followed by a focus group discussion to evaluate knowledge of participants. During the discussions, participants gave their definitions for democracy and explained their future plans to strengthen democracy in their localities based on learnings obtained through the training.



- 11 virtual consultative discussions were carried out with 151 community members from Trincomalee, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Kandy, Batticaloa, Monaragala, Ampara, Jaffna, and Vavuniya to identify their collective needs in order to implement need-based initiatives to support the reconciliation process in the country.

## Key highlights for 2022

- Compiled one case study capturing stories that reflect the impact of the SCORE initiative. Project staff worked with a writing consultant to explore the successes, failures and lessons learnt by speaking with beneficiaries. These lessons will feed into NPC's current and future work.
- 176 beneficiaries from eight districts participated in two regional symposia/ learning conferences held in Anuradhapura and Batticaloa on inclusive service delivery. Learnings included experience sharing by members of community platforms who led community interventions in their localities. The symposium in Anuradhapura was titled "Role of Public Service in Local Reconciliation Efforts" while the symposium held in Batticaloa was titled "Non-Discriminatory Customer Service". Participants at both sessions included government officers, local government authority representatives, community members/community connectors, other SCORE stakeholders from project locations, Grama Niladhari officers, integration officers, district coordinators etc.



## Impact story: Equality in Service Delivery

If you confront a government official with accusations of discrimination in service provision, it is likely that the reaction too would be confrontational – and non-productive. But if you spend some time in the company of government officials having a fully-interactive ‘conversation’ on non-discriminatory customer service provision, the result could be entirely different.

This is precisely what the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) programme sought to achieve through eighteen workshops on ‘non-discriminatory customer service’ for government officials in eight districts. The training module, developed by the National Peace Council (NPC), was based on research findings that revealed grounded narratives of discrimination in service delivery from the point of view of recipients. The study “Everyday Peace Indicators for Strengthening Reconciliation Programs” was carried out by the United States Institute for Peace and implemented by the Social Scientists’ Association in Sri Lanka. It guided the setting of objectives for many other SCORE activities as well.



“We think we generally serve our customers well, but it’s not something we regularly think about,” says Ms. Chithralatha, 46, a development officer working at the Ampara Divisional Secretariat. She is a mother of three, who joined the government service in 2003 after obtaining a bachelor’s degree at the University of Colombo. “We have never had a programme that focused on the subject and never felt the need to. But now I can see that this is relevant to all public servants, we should be regularly reminded of serving people better.”

The training module uses a three-step approach over two days. The first step guides participants to identify perceptions of discrimination through stories and findings from research studies. It examines the different ways in which discrimination can occur focusing on perceptions of ethnic and religious discrimination in service provision and examining the inter-connected discriminatory practices related to gender and disability.

The second step is the sharing of experiences and learnings on best practices in providing a quality service that is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the public and does not discriminate among them. “I liked the different types of activities that were used to deliver the knowledge and influence our thinking patterns. I consider this as a very impressive effort,” says A. A. Zanofar, a Development Officer in the Muttur Divisional Secretariat in the Trincomalee district.

In the third step, participants brainstorm ways to set right the discriminatory practices identified through the previous sessions. Participants are encouraged to define specific visions for themselves as service providers and draw up achievable targets for non-discrimination in their careers.

“Every month, we have a day for discussion at the secretariat, says Ms. Chithralatha. “We will use that time to share the knowledge and understanding we have gained. I think officials need to know that they must treat the public better and the public need to know that the officers are meant to serve them. This is also very important for village-level officials. I think a workshop should be held exclusively for them.”

## Preventing violent extremism through capacity building of CSOs

CSO-PVE Capacity Building in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (PVE) is a project that explored preventing violent extremism (PVE) in diverse contexts by engaging Sri Lankan and Bangladesh civil society organizations (CSOs) in PVE in their constituencies. The intervention, implemented with Helvetas Sri Lanka, is part of EU's support to civil society actors in promoting confidence-building and preventing radicalisation in South Asia. Project activities are centred in six districts- Ampara, Batticaloa, Kurunegala, Kandy, Mannar and Vavuniya. Here too, Covid restrictions were responsible for the low number of activities at the beginning of the year. However, NPC was able to complete district-based capacitation trainings for inter religious committee members, state officers, community police officers and youth. In addition, 35 activities including interlinking meetings, PVE refresher trainings with local experts were carried out during the reporting period.



### Highlights & achievements:

- 31 selected participants from project locations participated in a hybrid Training of Trainers workshop on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) through a practical community-based approach delivered by international trainer Patrick Burgess. He is an international human rights lawyers, transitional justice and preventing violent extremism (PVE) expert and co-founder and President of Indonesia based Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR).
- 70 community members successfully completed their training on theory, delivery and practice of PVE strategies/tools. The group includes 32 senior trainers who completed 120 hours of training and 38 trainers who completed 80 hours of training.
- 1,306 individuals including 201 DIRC/LIRC members, 237 state officers, 236 community police, and 632 youth were trained and mobilized on PVE concepts by national resource pool members as lead trainers and CSO members as trainers/co-facilitators.
- Produced a resource document on PVE with examples from around the world as part of learning tools for ToT participants.
- Carried out 3 virtual refresher training sessions for the trained ToT group. The sessions included examples of global PVE mechanisms, best practices and legal aspects of PVE in Sri Lanka.

### Key highlights for 2022

- 100 CSO representatives took part in 10 virtual Digitally Enabled Inter-Country Learning Exchanges. The group included the ToT resource pool, CSO members and youth. They used the platform to exchange ideas, share experiences and knowledge with their Bangladeshi counterparts.

- 10 CSO representatives and NPC staff visited Bangladesh enabling an intercountry exchange of lessons and experiences.
- 6 reports on dominant narratives and actors/drivers of violent extremism in respective districts developed through identification and analysis of ground situation/local context during district-based workshops. This information served as the basis for district/national level responses/campaigns to counter these narratives.
- 12 follow-up sessions with community police and targeted state institutions carried out to actualize the learnings on PVE. Performances including street drama, poster campaigns, a blood donation campaign were part of these actualization activities.
- 6 district level campaigns to counter identified narratives carried out through a series of performances including street drama, poster campaigns etc. creating an enabling environment and space for discussion on PVE.
- 30 short video documentaries capturing popular narratives from project locations and counter narratives developed through the PVE intervention and launched as part of the national campaign on evolving counter-narratives.
- 1,000,000 reached through Facebook/social media campaign by showcasing short video documentaries on popular narratives and counter narratives to promote inclusion and fact-checking before sharing content, as part of preventing violent extremism mechanisms



### Quotes from the field:

"After participating in the workshop, I learned more about PVE, especially the difference between terrorism and violent extremism and the work that young people can and should do to prevent PVE in our localities and the country in general. I strongly believe that youth and business community in locations should cooperate to make this a reality." **B. M. Riyath, Youth participant, Ampara District**



"In our locality, civil society led interventions to address/mitigate violent extremism face many challenges. These challenges are specially politically motivated. The only way to act against extremism and successfully mitigate adverse political interference, is by working together." **Supun Rathnayaka, Kandy District Youth Committee member**

"I learned about PVE-related ideology and why people become extremists. As youth, if we respect views that are different from ours and act with understanding and unity, we can prevent violent extremism based on ethnic, religious, regional, and cultural differences. The difference in status given to men and women in society is also a problem. Providing leadership training to young women can prevent violent extremism from growing," **A. R. Fathima, youth participant, University of Colombo**

## Using language to reconcile

Language to Reconcile (L2R – NLEAP) is a project that promotes language rights leading to national integration and reconciliation and assist citizens, both men and women, to communicate in official languages. In total, six activities were completed and included Focus Group Discussions (including two virtual FGDs) and capacititation workshops. The target groups were members of LIRCs, community police, government officials and members of women's groups. In addition, a 90-hour language training course for selected beneficiaries based on a module developed by NILET, was carried out in Akurana and Beruwala, (Tamil language for Sinhala speaking beneficiaries) and Trincomalee (Sinhala language for Tamil speaking beneficiaries) by NPC. Furthermore, youth from local universities and other educational institutions in the three project locations benefited through information sessions on using language apps effectively. An exchange visit to enable the practice of language was carried for beneficiaries from Akurana, Trincomalee and Beruwala.



### Highlights & achievements:

- 90 participants including LIRC members, community policing sub committee members from Kandy, Kalutara and Trincomalee districts receive capacititation on language policy and rights as part of capacititation workshops on Language Rights Promotion.
- 45 women from Kalutara, Kandy and Trincomalee participated in 3 focus group discussions (FGDs) to engage women community members in resolving identified issues in state sector service delivery institutions.
- 45 male and female participants from Beruwala, Trinco Town and Akurana divisional secretariat divisions participated in 3 focus group discussions (FGDs). The discussions engaged beneficiaries in identifying and resolving identified issues in state sector service delivery institutions.
- 49 LIRC members in target locations trained on the methodology of carrying out a language audit. This was initially planned as a central event but was shifted to the locations due to the prevailing pandemic situation in the country.
- 9 language audits were carried out in nine state institutions in all three locations to find solutions for identified language issues



within local state service delivery structures- Police, MOH Office and DS Office.

- NPC engaged with state institutions that were part of the language audit and supported them to resolve some of the identified issues.
- A mapping was produced to illustrate actionable processes for available mechanisms to safeguard language rights. Findings collected through FGDs and language audits at state institutions to redress existing language rights related violations and identify available mechanisms to safeguard the language rights, documented and available.
- Gap analysis on language related policies and practices, national level overview on addressing language related issues were compiled based on findings collected through language audits, with support from external consultant
- 137 beneficiaries including LIRC members, community leaders/community policing sub committees and targeted community members in Akurana, Beruwala and Trincomalee supported through a 90-hour spoken language course module developed by NILET. In Beruwala and Akurana, Tamil language was taught to Sinhala speakers while in Trincomalee, a Sinhala language course was conducted for Tamil speaking beneficiaries.
- 301 youth in project locations received information sessions on using available language apps and how to use them for greater community good.
- NILET worked with NPC to set up and carry out virtual meetings for the language expert pool.
- 5 video clips developed by partners covering the project intervention.
- 3 joint campaigns carried out to resolve language related issues with LIRC members, community leaders and members of community policing/sub-committees in the three project locations
- 59 beneficiaries took part in three exchange visits to practice their second language and learn from the experiences of the other. A group of 12 beneficiaries from Akurana visited Trinco and 24 beneficiaries from Trinco visited Beruwala and Akurana. A group of 23 beneficiaries from Beruwala, visited Akurana and Trincomalee.



## Key highlights for 2022

- 65 participants including LIRC members, community policing sub-committee members from Batticaloa and Negombo districts received facilitation on language policy and rights as part of facilitation workshops on Language Rights Promotion.
- 42 women from Batticaloa and Negombo participated in 2 focus group discussions (FGDs) to engage women community members in resolving identified issues in state sector service delivery institutions.
- 28 male and female participants from Batticaloa and Negombo participated in 2 focus group discussions (FGDs). The discussions engaged beneficiaries in identifying and resolving identified issues in state sector service delivery institutions.

- 8 language audits were carried out in eight state institutions in both districts to find solutions for identified language issues within local state service delivery structures- Police, District Hospital, District Labor Department Office and DS Office. 21 females and 19 males participated in this language audit.
- 127 beneficiaries including LIRC members, community leaders/community policing sub-committees and state officials in Batticaloa, Negombo and Trincomalee were supported through a 90-hour spoken language course module developed by NILET. In Negombo and Trincomalee, Sinhala speakers are receiving Tamil language learning while in Batticaloa, a Sinhala language course is conducted for Tamil speaking beneficiaries.

### **Impact story:**

#### **The need to identify language related issues in the country**

Through the **Language to Reconcile (L2R)** intervention, NPC carried out 2 focus group discussions in the Akurana Divisional Secretariat, Kandy. The first session focused on women while the second session targeted both men and women representing government institutions and community-based organizations and focused on identification of language-based issues affecting community wellbeing. The discussion ended successfully and enabled participants to identify existing language-related discriminatory practices in their localities. Through the discussion, participants were guided to find solutions for the identified issues by collectively brainstorming and recalling their own experiences on the particular matter. Beneficiaries shared their experiences to explain how these discriminatory practices can lead to weakening of social cohesion among the communities. Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, a female participant discussed difficulties she has faced as she is not familiar with the second language.

*"In the present day, women experience a lot of hardships due to the economic crisis. This situation is further exacerbated due to women, especially those from minority communities, not being able to speak/understand a second language. Actually, this is a serious societal issue that has not received adequate publicity". FGD participant, Akurana*

Women who participated in the FGDs represented different tiers of society. Some came from the government sector while others participated representing community and civil society organizations. These respondents elaborated how language related difficulties lead to discrimination while highlighting their own personal experiences at hospitals, police stations, banks, post offices, divisional secretariat, courts etc. In particular, they pointed out that Tamil-speaking communities encounter these issues and explained how the lack of communication leads to their marginalization. To strengthen inclusivity within a society through language, the participants suggested the recommendations noted below:

- Develop module or textbook with frequently used Sinhala/English words translated into both languages as a study tool
- Use multi lingual signboards, notice boards, application forms etc. in public locations/institutions
- Appoint officials capable of speaking in at least two of the three languages into government institutions
- Populate the idea that learning a second language is important to strengthen cohesion among different communities

NPC will take these recommendations into consideration when developing the next phase of the L2R project.

## Sustaining peace through pluralism and inclusive service delivery

Sustaining peace through pluralism and inclusive service delivery project supported by the Freedom House promotes pluralism in the process of inclusive services delivery to ensure that all communities receive inclusive services effectively and efficiently without discrimination. The project focus is twofold. One is to facilitate the development and offering of a certificate course through four national level universities on pluralism and inclusive services delivery, targeting front-line government officers. The second is to provide sub-grants of up to one million rupees each to five district-based CBOs to implement projects that promote pluralism and ensure that inclusive services are practically delivered to the communities by linking government officers and under-privilege communities. During the period under consideration thirty-three (33) activities were conducted. The activities include preliminary meetings with government officers, focus group discussions with government officers as well as members of CBOs', initiation and releasing funds for sub-grant projects to five selected CBOs and facilitative meetings with university academics to finalize course content of the certificate course.



### Highlights & achievements:

- 5 sub grants in process to be awarded to five community-based organisations in Mannar, Batticaloa, Matara, Kegalle and Ratnapura to support community initiatives on inclusion.
- 4 universities- Ruhuna, Eastern, Sabaragamuwa and Jaffna, working with NPC to develop the course on non-discriminatory service delivery. The certificate course module is being developed for front line state officials who work in the provision of key services to communities. NPC is currently waiting for the course module to be adopted by the different universities.
- 180 citizens including state officials engaged in service delivery, civil society activist, community leaders and the general public consulted in Matara, Batticaloa, Ratnapura and Jaffna districts to identify gaps in service delivery. The discussions served as the foundation for developing the course module on inclusive service delivery.
- Several rounds of discussions and meetings with academic staff at the 4 universities carried out to support development of the course module.
- 5 local CBOs in Mannar, Batticaloa, Matara, Kegalle and Ratnapura shortlisted to receive support through the sub grants scheme to promote pluralism and ensure that inclusive services are practically delivered to communities by linking government officers and under-privilege communities.

## Key highlights for 2022

- Residential workshop held at Deer Park Hotel, Girithale to finalize course module on "Sustainable peace through pluralism and inclusive service delivery". Academic staff of four universities and other supporting academics including Prof. T. Jayasingham, Dr. Joe William and Dr. Jehan Perera also participated.
- MoU with Eastern University (EUSL) signed to offer the advanced certificate course through the university. Executive Director of NPC Dr. Jehan Perera, and Prof. V Kanagasingham, Vice Chancellor of Eastern University signed the agreement on behalf of the organisations.
- The subawards managed by NPC through FH funds to promote pluralism and inclusive service delivery supported the following organisations. The subawardees received \$3,000 as support to implement these initiatives. Information on proposed activities of each subawardees follows:
  - **Ensuring documentation rights and voting rights of Tamils of Indian origin.** Environment & Community Development Information Centre (ECDIC), an organization based in the Ratnapura District, implemented this activity in four estates. Several need assessments and group discussions carried out in these areas for beneficiaries and state officials highlighted that some Tamils of Indian origin did not possess relevant documents- i.e. birth certificates, identity cards, and marriage certificates etc.
  - **Uplifting socio-economic conditions of plantation and neighbouring village youth.** People's Development Foundation (PDF) of Kegalle District implemented this project to develop the skills of youth from underprivileged families living in the plantation sector (mostly Indian origin Tamils) and surrounding villages (mostly Sinhala) through government-run Vocational Training Centres.
  - **Empowering youth to contribute to the development of pluralistic concepts for public service.** Matara District-based Voice of Talent (VOT) implemented this activity, which aimed to train youth and enable them to form lobbying peer groups to ensure inclusive service delivery by state officials.
  - **Reconciliation and reintegration to sustain peace in resettled communities.** The Organization for Elangai Refugees Rehabilitation Ceylon (OFERR), located in Jaffna District, commenced this activity to facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees from India. Those who have been living as unhoused people for many decades were supported in obtaining various documents, especially civil documents that were needed in order to receive services from state institutions.
  - **Creating a conducive environment for peace among ethnic communities.** Batticaloa-based organization Caritas Eastern Human Economic Development Batticaloa (Caritas EHED) completed their activity, which worked to capacitate district-based peace committees through trainings and activities that promote social cohesion.



## Open Society Foundations

Open Society Foundations (OSF) supported NPC to promote national reconciliation, inter-community trust building and pluralism through education, capacity building and advocacy particularly through support for strategic activities when necessary. An overwhelming component of NPC's funding is project funding, making organisational sustenance challenging. OSF's institutional support has enabled NPC to sustain its core staff through funding gaps. The overall purpose of this grant is to enable the NPC to carry out its activities with greater flexibility in light of diminishing space for civil society engagement and diminishing donor support for central and administrative needs. The grant is supporting NPC to streamline its operations by strengthening its administrative systems and staff capacity while providing fundamental support for a number of ongoing project activities which are geared to help Sri Lanka in its path to achieving reconciliation, sustainable peace and a more pluralistic identity.

Furthermore, OSF support for relief funding during Covid 19 enabled NPC networks – community and partner organisation, to build trust within their communities. It also facilitated engagement with state officers as co-collaborators in supporting communities, sustaining and enhancing ongoing engagements focused on mitigating conflict/tension.

## Highlights & achievements:

- Printing and publication of annual report: Compiling and printing the 2020 Annual Report for NPC was supported through this intervention. The Annual Report captured NPC's interventions in the previous year and enabled the organisation visually represent some of its key achievements and share them with the membership, media, donors and local diplomatic community. The annual report is one of the key components that capture and store organisational memory.
- Publication on reconciliation: A publication titled 'the star that guides the way' capturing the perspectives on reconciliation of 107 beneficiaries was produced. The group that contributed to this publication included religious leaders, community leaders, state officials including retired officers, members of District Inter Religious Committees (DIRC) etc., who have worked with or continues to work with NPC on peace, reconciliation, inclusion etc. Due to continuous requests from project partners, local organisations etc. for the English version of the publication, NPC utilized OSF funding available through its Advocacy, Outreach and Cohesion budget to produce 150 copies of the publication. A distribution list will be maintained and shared.



## Key highlights for 2022

- Staff capacity building: 37 staff members including the Executive Director, Programme Advisor and all heads of ongoing projects and other staff participated in a staff capacity building training. The chairperson of NPC also took part in this learning activity. On day 1, a

full Financial and Administration overview was carried out to familiarise staff on the updated NPC Administration and Financial Management manual. On day 2, staff completed their input to the strategic objectives and thereafter participated in team building activities designed by different project teams.

- Scholarships for university students: NPC supported the interview process for the provision of scholarships to 17 university students from the Tamil Malaiyaha community in the estate sector. OSF funding enabled the interview process to be carried out on-site. The interview panel was made up of the NPC chairperson and several staff members, including a former scholarship recipient who is now employed in our finance department.
- Supporting Career Content 22 - Exhibition & Career Fair: NPC supported the University of Ruhuna, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences by participating in their annual career guidance and job fair. This event gives aspiring job applicants the ability to reach out to possible organisations in the country that offer employment.

## Covid Response

Following requests from its inter religious networks at district and sub district level, NPC found funds for Covid relief work through the reallocation of existing funds and by raising funds from donors. While relief support is crucial at this time, NPC also finds that it enables positive collaborative engagement with government agencies strengthening future engagement and access. Also, the engagement provides for more equitable distribution of relief. This activity also helped to improve the overall image of NPC as an NGO and by extension the overall image of NGOs in Sri Lanka. Anecdotal evidence from localities suggest that this was achieved, with communities and state institutions appreciating the civil society response to the Covid 19 crisis. NPC reported to all District Secretariats and the NGO Secretariat the relief work it carried out through the German Embassy. Also, NPC's engagement through its networks on relief work through this funding was also reported through the Civil Society Collective for Covid 19 Relief. NPC consulted the state and engaged with appointees of the Civil Society Collective in all its relief efforts, ensuring cohesive and efficient disbursement of limited resources.

- **Realignment/repurposing of funds:** NPC was able to negotiate with donor **Misereor** to repurpose funds from the ongoing PACT project to support Covid relief activities in 29 locations across 24 districts in the country. These include the provision sanitation items (sinks, spray machines, PPE kits) to government sector institutions especially those engaged in service delivery and provide food support including the provision of dry ration packs to marginalised communities. This included 75 litres of hand sanitizer, 125 spray machines, 215 sinks, 4,884 PPE kits, and 1,990 dry ration packs.
- **German Embassy funds:** The German Embassy in Sri Lanka provided funds to support specific institutions including orphanages/elders' homes/homes for disabled and intermediate care centres that specifically provides care and support for Covid patients. In total 87 care homes for elders, children and differently abled persons and five intermediate care centres for Covid 19 patients were supported with dry rations and cleaning/disinfectant agents.
- **Support from Agiamondo:** NPC was able to distribute educational support for Ordinary Level (O/L) students and food support for marginalised communities in 29 locations across 24 districts with support from Agiamondo. A group of 870 ordinary level students received study packs while 1,450 families received food support.

## New Projects for 2021

### Action for Religious Coexistence

The project "Action for Religious Coexistence (ARC)" accentuates the constitutional commitments to religious freedom in 14 target areas with the engagement of multiple sectors- religious leaders, state officials, community policing units, integration structure and youth to sustain the space for religious freedom. This will be pursued within the framework of pluralism and rule of law through education, mobilization and actualization. The initiative will build on the CERF engagement, enhancing its scope, both vertically and horizontally. Work on this intervention commenced in August 2021 to expand the engagement and the contribution of the CERF project by establishing two new LIRCs and 14 youth wings in targeted locations. As both CERF and ARC were running parallelly, our donor the US State Department (DRL) instructed NPC to concentrate on completing CERF activities which had got delayed due to the Covid pandemic and subsequent closure of the country. Therefore, only a few activities that did not overlap with CERF activities were completed during the reporting period. They included the following:

- 4 facilitative meetings in Beruwala, Negombo, Weligama and Akurana which served as project introductory meetings to plan activities in the ARC project based on lessons learnt and the success of the earlier intervention (CERF).
- 14 youth wings and two new LIRCs were established expanding the CERF engagement.

### Key highlights for 2022

- 824 direct beneficiaries reached through 12 orientation meetings in 11 districts. 390 committee members and 434 youth wing members oriented on the ethos of the intervention and guided on how to work towards achieving the ultimate goal of the intervention.
- 434 Youth Wing members capacitated through orientations, and included 211 male and 223 female beneficiaries. Identifying the role of youth wings, it is anticipated that these direct beneficiaries will be able to contribute towards the successful implementation of project activities.
- 100 Local Inter Religious Committee (LIRCs) members and 443 Youth Wing members in Mawanella, Addalachchenai, Batticaloa, Kuliyapitiya, Panduwasnuwara, Bandarawela, Akurana, Negombo and Weligama capacitated through 11 knowledge building programs on pluralism.

### Initiative to strengthen NPC as a 'think tank/research' organisation

NPC is working with the University of South Carolina to strengthen its information gathering/scoping and analyses. NPC has already through other initiatives trained its 'Master Trainers' and university student beneficiaries as enumerators for research. This intervention supports capacity building of NPC staff to set in place systems for research. Several consultative meetings were carried out with this regard in 2021. Research on Sri Lankan Malaiyaha estate community members currently living in IDP camps in India and their idea of 'belonging' is planned for completion in the following year.

## Projects Received in 2022

### Protecting Civic Space in Sri Lanka

NPC will implement a project titled "Protecting Civic Space in Sri Lanka" over a period of 48 months with international partner LAW- Legal Action Worldwide and a group of other local partners including Centre for Equality and Justice, Equal Ground, Hashtag Generation, and other justice institutions and actors in Sri Lanka. It is envisaged that through this intervention the public, especially vulnerable groups will be empowered to understand their rights of freedom of association and freedom of assembly and to protect their privacy. To support this intervention, NPC will develop curricula-based training and materials aimed at building the knowledge of community leaders on their rights related to freedom of association and freedom of assembly. It is envisaged that in the long-term, knowledge on freedom of association will be updated and developed among Sri Lankan society

### Key highlights for 2022

- 600 community leaders reached and their ideas collated through a qualitative research on community level citizenship focused thematic organic formations to lay the foundation for future activities. The research was carried out by the Social Scientists' Association covering 12 locations with support from the Master Trainers.

### Capacitating Transformation

Capacitating Transformation (CapT) aims to improve the capacity and thereby efficiency of staff attached to the Office on Missing Persons. The expected long-term results are that families of missing will be supported to find closure in their search for missing loved ones, that they are granted interim compensation until a final solution is determined and are included in the framework for post war transition. This project will be implemented in Colombo, where the OMP's head office is located, and in Jaffna, Mannar, Batticaloa and Matara where the OMP has district offices.

Capacitation will be primarily via trainings, both at district level and national level. Information sessions will also be carried out for government officials attached to state sector service delivery whose cooperation is required in reaching the target groups for whom the OMP is meant. This intervention is supported by the Canadian Government through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI).

### Women Organized for Inclusion through Community Engagement

Women Organized for Inclusion through Community Engagement (WOICE) intends to capacitate, mentor and strengthen a group of sub national women civic leaders as super activists contributing to the ongoing movement for reform of the state structure and to introduce a systems change. The project has several principal aims. The first is to amplify the women's voice within the ongoing reform movement. The second is to strengthen women's advocacy to include women's issues and minority issues – ethnic and religious, in the reform agenda. The third is to garner support and trust for women's leadership at the sub national level by supporting women to lead response initiatives to local issues working with multiple influential sectors within that space. This project is supported with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

## **Media and Advocacy**

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

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

### **Reconciliation is when the country sings together** (01.02.2021)

The singing of the national anthem became a matter of controversy last year at the National Independence Day celebration when it was sung only in Sinhala and not in both the official languages as it had been sung in the previous years in keeping with the national reconciliation process. The singing of the national anthem in both the Sinhala and Tamil languages is in accordance with the recommendation of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission appointed by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2011 when he was president.

### **Keep open the space for soft skills programmes by NGOS** (06.03.2020)

A set of guidelines issued by the Mullaitivu District Secretariat to all non-governmental organisations working in the district has notified them that their work should be focused on infrastructure development and not on soft skill training. Examples of the latter that are provided are women's empowerment, child rights, youth training, human rights, land rights training, and formation and strengthening of self-help groups. The district secretariat has said that action plans of organisations that contain "less than 70 percent of physical infrastructure activities, such as construction of rural roads, wells and preschools, will not receive its approval", which may be an indication of the district's needs rather than a policy statement.

### **Consult with affected communities on burial of Covid victims** (20.04.2020)

The rapid spread of the Covid virus throughout the world has infected more than 2 million people and led to over 150,000 deaths at the present time. The understanding of the spread of the virus, which is highly contagious, is still evolving. It is in these circumstances that a controversy has developed in Sri Lanka regarding safety issues on whether persons whose death is due to the Covid virus could be buried or cremated. The government has decided that those whose deaths are caused by the Covid virus should be cremated and the Ministry of Health has issued a regulation to that effect.

### **Display magnanimity to stop the vicious cycle** (17.05.2021)

The 12th year of the end of the war will fall on May 18 and 19. May 18 is the day that the Tamil people in the North and East have selected to remember those who died in the course of the war, particularly in its last phase. May 19 is the day that the government celebrates its war victory. These two days have become symbolic of the continuing ethnic polarization within the country. The National Peace Council regrets that 12 years after the fighting ended on the battlefields of the North, the war continues in the minds of the people. Until there is collective remembrance of loss, there will continue to be a reinforcement of the separation through separate memorialisations.

## **Need for an ethical Covid containment policy (06.06.2021)**

Despite entering into the 3rd week of lockdown the infection and death rates in the country due to the Covid virus continue to remain high which has led to the extension of the lockdown. One of the significant tragedies of this pandemic which has been noted by professional medical associations is the disproportionate number of elderly persons who have died as a result of Covid infection. Over 73 percent of the deaths in Sri Lanka are of persons who are above 60 years of age according to the Sri Lanka Medical Council, while they are only 18 percent of the country's population. This is on account of the failure to give priority in providing vaccination to the elderly population.

## **Peaceful public protest is a Fundamental Right (13.07.2021)**

Several protests by different political parties and civil society groups on grievances facing different sectors of society have been broken up by the police. The latest was the breakup by police of a peaceful public protest by a civil society group including Joseph Stalin, head of the Ceylon Teachers Union. The protestors, including elderly women and religious clergy, were arrested by the police on grounds of violating Covid health guidelines. When the judge refused to send them to a distant COVID quarantine center, the police forcibly carried them off to be transported to an army camp in the North.

## **Mangala Samaraweera upheld the right to dissent and to be different (25.08.2021)**

The untimely demise of Mangala Samaraweera is a grievous cause of sorrow to those who knew him and a great loss to those who shared his belief in a country in which there are equal rights to all. The late minister passionately believed in a Sri Lanka that was united and belonged to all in equal measure irrespective of ethnicity, religion, caste or gender. We at the National Peace Council remember the minister Mangala Samaraweera for championing a political solution to the ethnic conflict like we do. He believed in obtaining people's support for the peace process and sought to share his vision with them and on a large scale through the Sudu Nelum (white Lotus) movement that he led.

## **Ratchet effect must protect constitutional rights (10.10.2020)**

There has been an unprecedented public outcry against the draft 20th Amendment which is presently being subjected to judicial scrutiny. Some of the most respected civic organisations in the country, including religious clergy, trade unions, the State Auditors Association and the Bar Association have expressed their serious objections to the proposed constitutional amendment. Nevertheless, the government appears determined to strengthen the presidency at the cost of other institutions.

## **Proposals made to experts committee to draft a new constitution (29.12.2020)**

The government's intention to replace the present constitution with a new constitution offers the possibility of developing a framework of governance that could address the conflicts between the ethnic and religious communities that have marred the post-independence progress of Sri Lanka. Under colonial rule Sri Lanka was at the top of Asia's economies and described as the "Switzerland of the East." However, the inability to forge a unified polity, and ensure a feeling of equal belonging and participation in national policymaking, led to decades of conflict.

# **FINANCES**

## Financial Report



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NYR/KSD/JJ

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

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

##### *Opinion*

We have audited the accompanying Financial Statements of National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited ("the Organization") which comprise the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2021, and Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Reserves and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes set out on pages 07 to 22.

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited as at 31 December 2021, and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Sri Lanka Statement of Recommended Practice for Not-for-Profit Organizations (Including Non-Governmental Organization) (SL SoRP-NPO's [including NGO's]) issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka.

##### *Basis for opinion*

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

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

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

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

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

(Contd....2/-)

Partners: H M A Jayasinghe FCA FCMA, R N de Saram ACA FCMA, Ms. N A De Silva FCA, W R H De Silva FCA ACMA, Ms. Y A De Silva FCA, Ms. K R M Fernando FCA ACMA, N Y R L Fernando ACA, W K B S P Fernando FCA FCMA, Ms. L K H L Fonseka FCA, D N Gamage ACA ACMA, A P A Gunasekera FCA FCMA, A Herath FCA, D K Hulangamuwa FCA FCMA LLB (London), Ms. G G S Manatunga FCA, A A J R Perera ACA ACMA, Ms. P V K N Sajeewani FCA, N M Sulaiman ACA ACMA, B E Wijesuriya FCA FCMA, C A Yalagala ACA ACMA

Principals: W S J De Silva BSc (Hons)-MIS MSC-IT, G B Goudian ACMA, D L B Karunathilaka ACMA, Ms. P S Paranavitane ACA ACMA LLB (Colombo), T P M Ruberu FCMA FCCA

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#### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

28 October 2022  
Colombo

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2021

ASSETS	Note	2021 Rs.	2020 Rs.
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	4	96,959,607	99,354,272
Intangible Assets	5	264,405	296,037
		<u>97,224,012</u>	<u>99,650,309</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Inventories	6	-	17,350
Receivables	7	8,153,260	1,241,707
Cash and Bank Balances	8	37,860,162	56,117,422
		<u>46,013,422</u>	<u>57,376,479</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>143,237,434</u>	<u>157,026,788</u>
<b>FUNDING &amp; LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>			
Restricted Funds	13	8,729,562	26,617,980
Unrestricted Funds	10	364,816	752,892
Reserve A	11	10,579,838	9,601,213
Reserve B	12	16,094,442	16,094,442
Revaluation Reserves		<u>84,379,680</u>	<u>84,379,680</u>
		<u>120,148,338</u>	<u>137,446,207</u>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Staff Welfare Fund	14	725,853	725,853
Retirement Benefit Liability	9	8,733,287	7,873,932
Deferred Liability	16	552,528	789,160
		<u>10,011,668</u>	<u>9,388,945</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Income Tax Payable	22.3	4,309,903	4,908,349
Payables	17	8,767,525	4,881,214
Current Portion of Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings	15	-	402,073
		<u>13,077,428</u>	<u>10,191,636</u>
<b>Total Funding and Liabilities</b>		<u>143,237,434</u>	<u>157,026,788</u>

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

Finance Manager

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

Director

Director

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 22 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

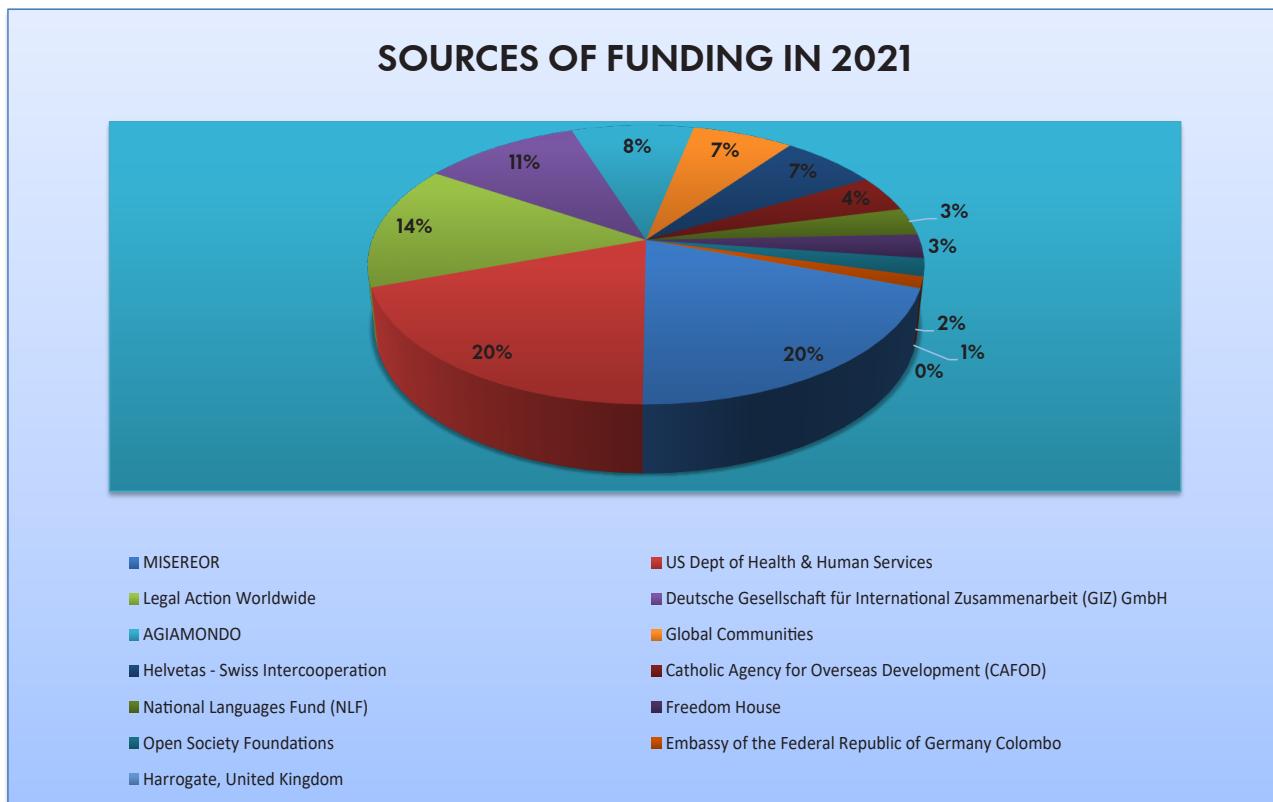
Year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 Rs.	2020 Rs.
Incoming Resources	18	210,546,783	176,468,426
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>			
Project Expenses	19	(210,546,783)	(173,368,426)
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>		<u>(210,546,783)</u>	<u>(173,368,426)</u>
<b>Net Surplus/ (Deficit) on Operating Activities</b>		-	3,100,000
Revenue Earned from Other Activities	20	6,130,425	3,423,261
Administrative Expenses	19.1	(4,783,611)	(5,896,051)
Finance Cost	21	(126,411)	(191,694)
<b>Net Surplus/ (Deficit) Before Tax</b>		<u>1,220,404</u>	<u>435,516</u>
Income Tax Expenses	22.2	(629,854)	(377,841)
<b>Net Surplus/ (Deficit) After Tax</b>		<u>590,549</u>	<u>57,675</u>
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>		<u>590,549</u>	<u>57,675</u>

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 22 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.

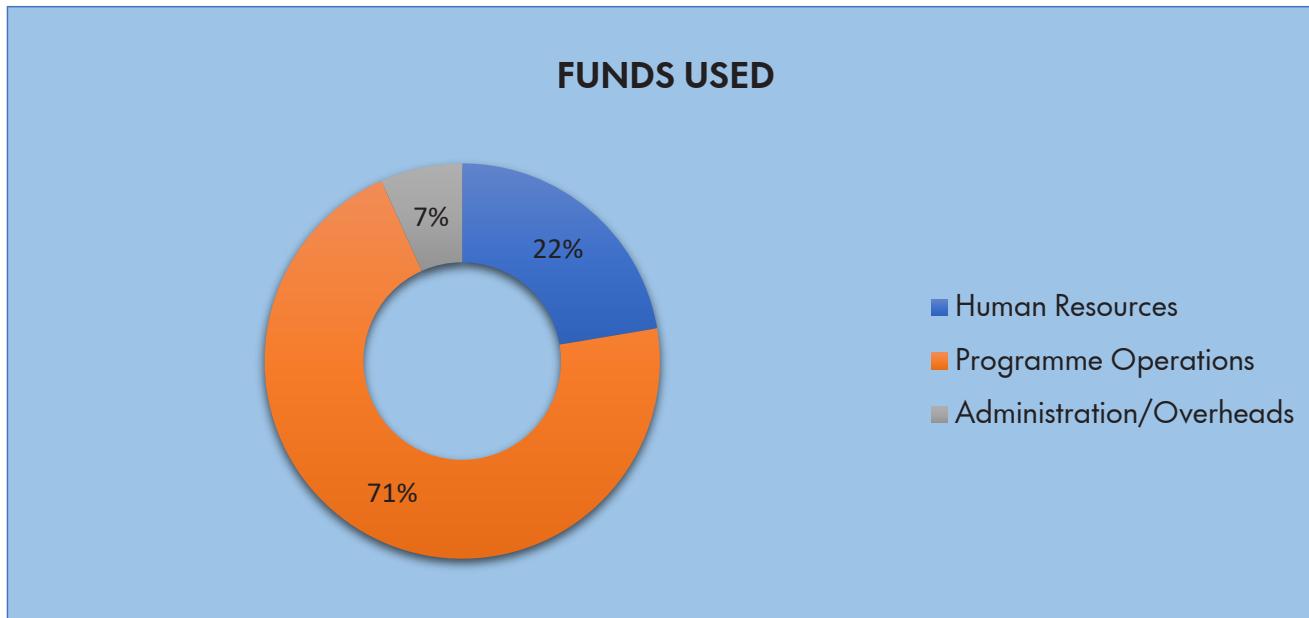


## Funding Portfolio



Name of donor	Amount (LKR)	Percentage
MISEREOR	37,546,697	19.60%
US Dept of Health & Human Services	37,283,732	19.47%
Legal Action Worldwide	27,636,351	14.43%
Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	20,673,610	10.79%
AGIAMONDO	16,199,875	8.46%
Global Communities	13,333,410	6.96%
Helvetas - Swiss Intercooperation	12,732,398	6.65%
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)	8,131,699	4.25%
National Languages Fund (NLF)	6,118,700	3.19%
Freedom House	5,263,200	2.75%
Open Society Foundations	3,935,376	2.05%
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Colombo	2,498,100	1.30%
Harrogate, United Kingdom	179,956	0.09%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>191,533,104</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Funds Utilisation



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 PARTNERS AND DONORS

### Major Donors



### Project Partners



## Way Forward – Looking to the future

Sri Lanka faces an uncertain future. The country is regressing economically, going backwards and downwards. The World Bank has warned that the economy could shrink by 9.2 percent this year. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned that at least 5.7 million people or 26% of the population in Sri Lanka require humanitarian assistance. As a result of this crisis, that affects all sections of the population regardless of ethnicity, religion, caste or gender, there is a growing demand for more information and knowledge on the current economic situation. Along with this focus on economic matters, there is also a focus on the political question of the government's legitimacy and on the need for a government with a fresh mandate from the people to deal with the new situation.

The focus on the economy and on politics, however, has led to the neglect of the unresolved crisis of ethnic and religious conflict that has undermined Sri Lanka's unity and strength from the very dawn of Independence when the bigger ethnic communities ganged up against the weakest one, the Tamils of recent Indian origin, and stripped them of their citizenship rights and with it their political, economic and social rights. The ways and means of resolving the economic and political crises are much analysed and debated, but not so the ethnic crisis that led to three decades of war and internal division. In the forthcoming period NPC will continue with its objective of engaging all of the sectors and levels of society that comprises the majority of moderate and right-thinking people.

It was noticeable that the degree of public protest in the North and East of the country, where civil war raged for nearly three decades, was less than in other parts of the country. The ethnic and religious minorities feel that the issues that have affected them most severely are not being adequately taken into consideration. The practice of democracy needs to be supported by institutions that ensure the inclusion of minorities into processes of decision making and that pay heed to minority voices. Among the most significant features of the ongoing protests have been their largely peaceful and non-violent character, though there have been spikes of serious violence.

Another notable feature is the presence of large numbers of youth, with women playing a prominent role in them. The protest movement consists of a wide cross section of the population that has spanned the generations and ethnic divides. They have utilized social media to inform themselves of issues as well as to mobilize greater numbers to their cause. They have also not fallen for the bait of ethnic nationalism. The opportunity this provides for developing the framework of a more just and inclusive society in which the rights of political participation and decision-making by ethnic and religious minorities and by women are strengthened.

In particular, NPC has been engaging with youth, women activists and with government officials through the building of their capacity to act as peace mediators. The values and ideals that NPC seeks to instill in the people is that of a plural society in which each and every community is guaranteed equal rights and the political space to accompany it. The plural nature of Sri Lankan society is a reality on the ground, but which people need to be willing to accept while at the same time not remaining fixed on majoritarian thinking which is that the community with the most number of votes wins and gets its way. It is not enough to accept the reality of Sri Lanka as a plural society; it is also necessary to go beyond and for reform institutions so that they lead to power sharing, devolution of power and respect for human rights in all circumstances. This will be NPC's priority in the coming year.



## National Peace Council of Sri Lanka.

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