

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

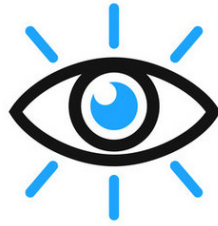


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இலங்கை தேசிய சமாதானப் பேரவை
National Peace Council of Sri Lanka

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National Peace Council of Sri Lanka



VISION

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



MISSION

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

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National Peace Council of Sri Lanka

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.



Board of Directors

Dr. Joseph Vethamanickam William	(Chairperson)
Dr. Jehan Gregory Ignatius Perera	(Executive Director)
Mr. Gintota Vidanalage Daya Tilakasiri	(General Secretary)
Professor Thangamuthu Jayasingam	(Joint Treasurer)
Professor Mariapillai Sellamuthupillai Mookiah	(Joint Treasurer)
Mr. Ahmed Javid Yusuf	(Director)
Ven. Buddiyagama Chandrarathana Thera	(Director)
Ms. Yvonne Visaka Dharmadasa	(Director)
Ms. Saroja Sivachandran	(Director)
Mr. Mohamed Hussain Mohamed Niyas	(Director)

Governing Council

Mr. Raja M. B. Senanayake
Rev. Fr. Joseph Mary
Mr. A. W. Hilmy Ahamed
Mr. Suresh Dayantha De Mel
Rev. Fr. T. Rohan Dominic
Mr. Rohana Hettiarachchi
Mr. M. Saburudeen
Mr. S. Sivakumar
Bishop (retd) Asiri Perera
Mr. Thushara Ranasinghe
Ms. Christobel Saverimuttu (Company Secretary)

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 (until June)
Ms. Venuri De Silva	Project Manager
Ms. Rasika Seneviratne	Assistant Project Manager (until December)
Mr. Nagaratnam Vijayakanthan	Associate Manager
Ms. Nirosha Anthony	Project Manager
Mr. Samsudeen Safi Nayaj	Project Coordinator
Ms. Yashoda Piyumali	Senior Project Officer (until June)
Mr. Shantha D. Pathirana	Senior Project Officer
Mr. Uwais Mohamed	Assistant Project Manager
Mr. G. Watkinson Senior	Project Officer (until January)
Ms. Ayesha Jayawardhana	Senior Project Officer
Ms. S. V. P. Sepalika Senior	Project Officer
Mr. A. N. Madushanka	Senior Project Officer
Ms. L. W. N. Vishaka	Assistant M & E Coordinator (until March)
Mr. Maduranga Dias	Accounts Officer
Ms. Ashoka K. Weerasinghe	Accounts Officer (until September)
Ms. Sundaralingam Ramya	Accounts Officer
Ms. P. M. M. S. H. Pathiraja	Associate Coordinator (until September)
Ms. Nethmi T. Liyanage	Project Officer
Ms. J. Jashaniya Jayarathna	Project Officer
Mr. Sampath Randunna	Project Officer
Mr. Tharindu K. Nanayakkarawasam	Project Officer
Mr. Arafaath Rahby	Project Officer
Mr. Nadaraja Pasdevan	Project Officer (until August)
Ms. H. M. G. P. K. Herath	Administration Officer
Mr. Nagaratnam Krishnakumar	M & E Officer (joined March)
Ms. Indushika Uadani Pathirana	Project Officer (joined March)
Mr. T. Logidash	Project Officer (joined September)
Ms. Sihara Chandrasiri	Project Officer (joined September)
Mr. Malindu B. Weerakkodi	Project Officer (joined October)
Ms. Subramaniyam Sangary	Project Officer (joined October)
Ms. Chamini Lashika Kumari	Project Officer (joined November)
Ms. Fathima Shazna	Project Officer (joined November)
Ms. Janani Nagaraja	Finance Officer (joined December)
Ms. Nishanthi Gunawardhana	Project Officer (joined December)
Mr. Sumudu Jayasooriya	Administration Associate
Mr. S. Meril Karunajeewa	Administration Associate
Mr. Sarath Karunarathne	Administration Associate
Ms. Asenika Madurangani	Office Aid

Chairperson's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the National Peace Council (NPC) for the year ended December 31, 2023. This Report highlights the work done by NPC's project and administrative teams and changes that have occurred in individuals and communities as they grappled with issues that have long divided the people of Sri Lanka.

As we mark another year in our journey towards peace and reconciliation, it is essential to reflect on both the progress made and the challenges that still lie ahead. Sri Lanka continues to emerge from a legacy of conflict, and while much has been achieved, we must acknowledge that the road to lasting peace and national unity requires persistent effort, compassion, and collective action.

2023 has been a year of unprecedented global and local challenges. The economic crisis and political instability have tested the resilience of our nation, bringing into sharp focus the underlying issues that still threaten our peaceful coexistence. However, these trials have also provided us with an opportunity to reshape our future—one based on justice, equity, and shared prosperity.

Reconciliation remains at the heart of Sri Lanka's long-term peace process. It is our firm belief that only through genuine dialogue, acknowledgment of past grievances, and a commitment to inclusivity can we build a society where all communities feel valued and respected. In 2023, the NPC intensified efforts to bridge divides between different ethnic, and religious groups. We continue to support grassroots initiatives that foster understanding, tolerance, and collaboration.

Peace cannot flourish in a society without strong and transparent democratic institutions. Over the past year, Sri Lanka has witnessed calls for reform in governance, justice, and the rule of law. We at NPC have advocated for the strengthening of democratic norms and institutions that protect the rights of all citizens. We believe that peace and democracy are intertwined, and our nation must continue to work toward a system of governance that is accountable, fair, and free from corruption.

The economic hardships faced by many Sri Lankans today are not just economic in nature but are tied to the broader issue of social justice. Economic deprivation can sow the seeds of unrest, and therefore, economic justice must be part of the peace agenda. We urge the government and all stakeholders to prioritize equitable development and inclusive growth that benefits all citizens, especially those who have been marginalized.

Based on our reports, initiatives undertaken by NPC in 2023 to promote peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka:

- NPC believes that the youth of Sri Lanka represent the hope of our future. We have expanded our programs to engage young leaders, empowering them to be champions of peace and advocates for reconciliation. We remain committed to creating platforms where the voices of the youth can be heard, and their contributions can shape the country's path forward.
- NPC aims to empower women civic leaders as activists driving state reform and systemic change through 3 key objectives- amplify women's voices in the reform movement, strengthen advocacy for women's and minority issues and build support for women's leadership in local initiatives.

- To promote and expand pluralistic coexistence within a rights-based framework, concluded during this reporting period.
- Sustaining religious freedom by working with religious leaders, state officials, community policing units and youth in targeted areas.
- To empower the public, particularly members of grassroots organizations, by educating them about their rights, including freedoms of association and assembly, implemented across 12 Divisional Secretariats
- NPC partnered with the Office on Missing Persons (OMP) to strengthen the capabilities of its staff across Sri Lanka's North, East, and South, focusing on Transitional Justice, Pluralism, Inclusivity, and mapping service delivery processes.
- Working with four national universities to promote sustainable Peace through Pluralism, and Inclusive Service Delivery.
- NPC in addressing national reconciliation, fostering inter-community trust, mobilizing local groups for conflict mitigation, and advocating for transitional justice frameworks.
- Promoting pluralism and facilitating negotiated political solutions that tackle the root causes of conflict in Sri Lanka

NPC believes that peace is not just the responsibility of governments or organizations like ours—it is a collective endeavor. We call upon all Sri Lankans—whether they are from the north or south, east or west, Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, or Burgher—to come together in the spirit of solidarity. Our nation's diversity is its strength, and by fostering mutual respect and understanding, we can build a country that is not only peaceful but also vibrant and prosperous for future generations.

We are grateful for the support given to us by our Executive Director and Staff, Board of Directors, Governing Council members, and Program Advisor. The achievements highlighted in this report is a testament, which would not have been possible without the unstinted support and cooperation from them. We are also grateful for our partner organizations and their support, which helps to carry our messages to many parts of Sri Lanka. We are also deeply grateful for our many international donors whose support has sustained our activities highlighted in this report, which we believe meet the needs of our time.

Joe William, PhD
Chairperson

General Secretary's Message

As we reflect on the year 2023, the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka has continued its unwavering commitment to promoting peace, reconciliation, and social justice across our nation. This year was marked by both challenges and opportunities that tested our resilience and reinforced the importance of our mission.

In 2023, we focused on strengthening community engagement, fostering dialogue among diverse groups, and advocating for policies that uphold human rights and democratic values. Our initiatives aimed to bridge divides, build trust, and create platforms for constructive engagement, especially in regions affected by longstanding conflicts.

Despite the complex socio-political landscape, our efforts were bolstered by the dedication of our staff, the support of our partners, and the courage of countless individuals who work towards peace. We launched several successful programs that empowered local communities, amplified marginalized voices, and promoted coexistence.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to addressing the root causes of conflict and advocating for sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. We believe that through collaboration, understanding, and perseverance, we can continue to make meaningful strides toward a harmonious future.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all our stakeholders, supporters, and the public who have stood by us. Together, we will continue to work for a peaceful and united Sri Lanka.

Thank you.

G. V. D. Tilakasiri
General Secretary

From the office of the Treasurer

We are pleased to record that despite the economic crisis and social difficulties we were able to utilize Rs 278 million in 2023, 13 million more than last year which is commendable. We were also able to allocate funds to pay an inflation allowance to our staff who were financially at the lower end.

The annual audit for 2023, conducted by Ernst and Young, resulted in an unqualified opinion, affirming the true and fair view of our financial performance. According to the auditor's opinion, the financial statements of National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited as of 31 December 2023 accurately reflect our financial position.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our donors for their continued trust and support, which has enabled us to operate at a higher capacity. During the year, we secured funding from a new agency, further strengthening our going concern and enhancing our reputation. Later in the year, we secured two major projects worth Rs. 540 million, to be implemented over 2-3 years in partnership with seven other organizations, both local and regional.

While increased overhead costs and rising taxes adversely impacted our finances, we remained focused on our long-term goals. We are committed to applying for more projects in our areas of interest and managing costs efficiently.

We implemented initiatives to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our programs. New financial and administrative best practices were incorporated into our manuals to ensure that we continue to achieve value for money in all our activities, improving all the time.

I take this opportunity to thank all the member of the board, GC and the staff for the support given to me and the Office of the Treasurer, for the tasks they had undertaken and completed meticulously.

With best wishes,

Dr. Thangamuthu Jayasingam

Hon. Treasurer

Executive Directors' Report

In 2023, Sri Lanka faced significant political and economic challenges. The political focus was on transitioning to a new government within the constitutional framework, while the economic challenge was to ensure that restructuring efforts did not disproportionately affect the poorer segments of society. These burdens fell heavily on the lower-income population, increasing the risk of future political instability.

However, this period also saw a positive shift in Sri Lankan electoral politics, especially regarding ethnic conflicts. Youth movements, driven by frustrations over corrupt leadership and the misuse of ethnic nationalism, pushed for systemic change, promoting equal citizenship and eschewing racism. Efforts to reach a bipartisan consensus on addressing the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities remain a challenge. Civil society, including sections of the Buddhist clergy and Tamil diaspora, is playing a key role in advocating for reforms. The "Himalaya Declaration" emerged from this dialogue, outlining principles for resolving the longstanding marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities.

During the period the National Peace Council (NPC) was actively involved in fostering inclusive dialogue and addressing the concerns of various communities through several projects. Below are key initiatives undertaken during the reporting period:

Plural Action for Conflict Transformation (PACT)

The PACT project, funded by Misereor and CAFOD, concluded this year. It promoted pluralistic coexistence and a rights-based approach across 17 districts. Over 135 activities were conducted, including training sessions for local government officials and women leaders, particularly in areas prone to conflict. The project emphasized pluralism and inclusion as key to conflict transformation.

Action for Religious Co-Existence (ARC)

The ARC project, focusing on religious freedom, engaged various stakeholders, including religious leaders, government officials, and community organizations, in 14 districts. Over 125 activities promoted pluralism and the rule of law. District-level interventions and national training sessions were held, with a focus on mitigating local tensions and fostering collaboration among religious communities.

Civil Peace Service (CPS)

In partnership with the German organization Agiamondo, the CPS project focused on organizational development within NPC. It provided training on video and storytelling techniques to enhance communication efforts. Additionally, a stress management program was offered to NPC staff to support their mental well-being amidst challenging working conditions.

Protecting Civic Space in Sri Lanka (LAW)

Funded by Legal Action Worldwide, this initiative empowered grassroots organizations by educating the public on their rights, particularly freedoms of association and assembly. The project completed 74 activities in 12 districts, promoting civic awareness and human rights.

Capacitating Transformation (CapT)

This project, in collaboration with the Office on Missing Persons (OMP), focused on strengthening the capabilities of OMP staff through training on transitional justice, nonviolent communication, and pluralism. Workshops were held across various regions, enhancing the understanding of inclusive frameworks for addressing the needs of victims of past conflicts.

Sustaining Peace through Pluralism and Inclusive Service Delivery (FH)

Supported by Freedom House, this project aimed to promote pluralism in service delivery. A certificate course on sustainable peace and inclusive governance was launched in four national universities, targeting government officers. The course covered topics like nonviolent communication and pluralistic service delivery in diverse societies.

Women Organized for Inclusion through Community Engagement (WOICE)

The WOICE project, backed by the National Endowment for Democracy, aimed to amplify women's voices in governance. It operated in seven districts, promoting women's leadership and advocacy for minority rights. During the reporting period, 57 activities were conducted to empower women civic leaders in pushing for systemic reforms.

Open Society Foundations (OSF)

OSF provided crucial funding for NPC's core activities, enabling the organization to address national reconciliation, transitional justice, and conflict mitigation. OSF's support helped NPC improve its administrative systems while continuing its mission to promote pluralism and build trust among communities.

Food Relief through NLEAP

Under the National Language Equality Advancement Project (NLEAP), with funding from the Canadian government, NPC implemented a one-time food relief program for vulnerable families severely affected by the economic crisis. Care packages were distributed to 350 families in five districts.

Global Centre for Pluralism (GCP)

The GCP partnered with NPC to conduct workshops on the Global Pluralism Monitor (GPM), a tool for assessing inclusion and exclusion across various societal dimensions. These workshops enhanced participants' understanding of pluralism and its importance in fostering national unity.

New Projects (2023–2024)

Mobilizing University-State Engagement for Reconciliation (MUSTER)

This project, supported by GIZ, aims to bridge the gap between academic research and state policy. By involving university students and academics, it seeks to address local community issues.

People Unite for Justice and Accountability (PUJA)

This 36-month initiative, in collaboration with several human rights organizations, advocates for transitional justice and accountability. It aims to build public support for justice across ethnic divides by focusing on truth-telling and memorialization.

Active Citizens for Elections and Democracy (ACED)

Funded by the European Union, ACED seeks to enhance electoral integrity in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. It partners with several organizations to foster active citizenship and improve electoral processes.

As can be seen from the above description NPC has been actively engaged in fostering reconciliation, promoting pluralism, and advocating for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities in Sri Lanka through a variety of initiatives. The organization has worked in partnership with international donors and local communities to implement projects that address both immediate needs and long-term goals for sustainable peace and inclusive governance. NPC's efforts in promoting pluralism, addressing ethnic and religious inequalities, and supporting civic engagement in Sri Lanka have been yielding visible results. By engaging various stakeholders—from government officials to grassroots communities—NPC continues to play a pivotal role in fostering peace and reconciliation across the country.

Dr. Jehan Perera

Executive Director

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HORANA DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT
KALUTHARA DISTRICT

THE PROJECT OF PROTECTING SPACE IN
SRI LANKA

LAW
Legal Action
Worldwide

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nleap
National Languages Education Action Project

GLOBAL
PLURALISM
MONITOR

இலங்கை



PROJECTS



Plural Action for Conflict Transformation

The Plural Action for Conflict Transformation (PACT) project, which operated in 17 districts across the country to promote and expand pluralistic coexistence within a rights-based framework, concluded during this reporting period. This long-term initiative, building on previous efforts, was funded by the German donor Misereor, with additional support from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).



In its final year, PACT achieved significant milestones, including carrying out 135 trainings/actualization activities etc. These included residential trainings on pluralism for sub-national state administrators, residential trainings for women members of local government authorities (LGAs) and women leaders, and targeted clustered trainings for subcommittee members in "hotspot" areas.

Activities & highlights:

- **Residential trainings on pluralism:** 10 two-day residential trainings for sub-national state administrators were conducted in Colombo, Monaragala, Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Batticaloa, Puttalam, Galle, Kurunegala, Matara, and Kandy.
- **Residential trainings for women leaders:** 11 two-day residential trainings focused on the LGA Act and gender, targeting women LGA members and community leaders in Colombo, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura, Nuwara Eliya, Puttalam, Vavuniya, Monaragala, Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, and Matara.
- **Need-based trainings for women leaders:** 16 one-day need-based trainings were conducted for women LGA members and community leaders, covering topics such as improving living conditions, equal rights, human rights, women's and child rights, democracy, governance, and financial management.



- **Youth leader trainings:** 9 one-day need-based trainings for district-level youth leaders focused on pluralism and building reconciliation through sports.
- **Clustered trainings for subcommittees:** 7 one-day need-based clustered training programs were held for subcommittees in Hambantota, with participants from Hambantota, Monaragala, Matara, Galle, and in Kurunegala, with participants from Kandy, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Puttalam, and Polonnaruwa.
- **Actualization activities:** 64 cohesion-building and mitigatory activities were implemented with all targeted groups.
- **National Inter-Religious Committee meetings:** 10 facilitative National Inter-Religious Committee meetings, including 8 provincial meetings, were conducted in Colombo, Matara, Kurunegala, Kandy, Ratnapura, Polonnaruwa, Vavuniya, and Monaragala.
- **Progress review and assessments:** 2 progress review meetings with partners and 17 partner assessments were carried out to evaluate project progress.
- **Documentaries on youth engagement:** 2 short video documentaries were produced by Kegalle and Nuwara Eliya DIRCs, highlighting youth engagement in cohesion building and promoting harmony.
- **Learning conferences:** 14 learning conferences were conducted with active engagement from CSO leaders in Anuradhapura, Badulla, Colombo, Galle, Hambantota, Kandy, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam, Monaragala, Matara, Ratnapura, and Batticaloa.
- **Facilitative meetings:** 99 facilitative meetings with DIRCs and Steering Committees, along with 31 meetings with subcommittee members, were held to ensure smooth operations and coordination.

Key highlights for 2024

- **Learning conferences:** 3 learning conferences to share project findings were conducted with active engagement from CSO leaders in Nuwara Eliya, Jaffna and Batticaloa.
- **National symposium:** A National Symposium titled “Religions to Reconcile: Strengthening Inclusive Reconciliation” took place on February 28, 2024 at BMICH, with the participation of 300 multi religious leaders and community leaders from around the country. The event showcased positive outcomes of the PACT project that engages communities on the importance on pluralism, inclusion and social cohesion. Guests at the event included HE President Ranil Wickremesinghe, former speaker Karu Jayasuriya and former minister madam Ferial Ashraff.

Action for Religious Co-Existence

The Action for Religious Co-Existence (ARC) project is designed to engage diverse sectors—including religious leaders, state officials, community policing units, integration structures, and youth—to sustain religious freedom in 14 targeted areas. This initiative builds on the previous CERF engagement, which concluded in 2022, expanding its reach both vertically and horizontally within the framework of pluralism and the rule of law. During the reporting period, the project successfully completed 125 activities aimed at promoting pluralism, religious freedom, and the rule of law. Key initiatives included district-level interventions, youth camp for Youth Wing members, open training sessions for Local Inter-Religious Committees (LIRCs), and targeted advocacy and mitigation programs to address local challenges. Additionally, two national-level training sessions, a progress review meeting, and subnational meetings with local policymakers were conducted to reinforce project objectives. District-level networking meetings with NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) played a vital role in fostering grassroots collaboration.



Activities & highlights:

- **District-level planning meetings:** Four meetings were held in Ampara, Batticaloa, Bandarawela, and Trincomalee, engaging 45 participants (37 males, 8 females) to discuss pluralism, religious freedom, and the rule of law.
- **Interventions for religious coexistence:** Two district-level events in Rakwana and Badulla attracted 102 participants (69 males, 33 females) focused on promoting religious coexistence.
- **Youth camp:** A camp brought together 79 participants (47 males, 32 females) from all 14 LIRC locations, including members of the National Youth Services Council, undergraduates, and youth from CSOs and vocational training centers.
- **Localized advocacy training:** Twenty youth-led advocacy sessions on pluralism and the rule of law engaged 804 participants (411 males, 393 females) across various locations, enhancing youth participation in these vital issues.
- **Open training sessions:** Ten training sessions for existing LIRCs on effective use of social media and mass media were conducted across multiple districts, with 407 participants (270 males, 137 females) improving their capacity for local engagement.
- **Advocacy interventions:** Twenty-six advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting pluralism and garnering support from local government members engaged 1,331 participants (840 males, 491 females), including LIRC and Divisional Secretary Office members.



- **Mitigation activities:** Five activities in Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, and Addalachchenai addressed infringements on religious freedom, reaching 199 participants (134 males, 65 females).
- **Exchange visits:** A group of 45 members from the Rakwana LIRC participated in an exchange visit to Addalachchenai and Batticaloa, involving a total of 105 participants (67 males, 38 females).
- **National-level training sessions:** Two training sessions on designing advocacy campaigns attracted 81 representatives (54 males, 27 females) from various CBO and NGO networks across 13 districts.
- **Subnational meetings:** Twelve meetings with local policymakers advocated for religious freedom and involved 189 participants (116 males, 73 females).
- **Progress review meeting:** One meeting assessed project implementation across all 14 partner locations, with 27 participants (21 males, 6 females), including LIRC coordinators and selected members.
- **District networking meetings:** Thirteen meetings conducted by LIRCs gathered support from NGOs and civil society organizations, engaging 1,143 participants (619 males, 524 females).
- **Setting up new LIRCs:** Two new LIRCs were formed in Mawanella (40 members) and Bandarawela (49 members), with training sessions on NVC, gender issues, mediation, PVE, and conflict transformation.
- **Community Policing training:** Two one-day sessions for 200 Community Policing subcommittee members in Bandarawela and Mawanella engaged 127 males and 73 females.



Key highlights for 2024

- **Community Policing training:** NPC worked with the Community Policing Directorate of the Sri Lanka Police to conduct a one-day training program focused on the Rule of Law, facilitation skills, and community policing. This inaugural session in Negombo welcomed 84 police officers (19 female, 65 male) from various divisions.
- **District-level interventions:** A total of 22 district-level intervention programs were carried out across multiple regions, including two each in Mannar, Vavuniya, Kandy, and Rakwana, along with one in Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Panduwasnuwara, Weligama, Mawanella, Kalutara, Badulla, Gampaha, Ampara, Kurunegala, and Negombo.
- **Youth engagement:** Fifteen advocacy programs were conducted with Youth Wing members across 11 locations, engaging 809 youths (387 males, 422 females) from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.
- **Youth interfaith placement:** An interfaith placement program aimed at promoting cross-cultural awareness was also conducted for 28 Youth Wing members (11 females, 17 males).
- **National advocacy campaigns:** Three national-level advocacy campaigns were organized by the NGO network on Religious Freedom. The first campaign, a large-scale event supported by several NGOs and CSOs such as PAFFREL, Sarvodaya, and the March 12 Coalition, attracted nearly 2,000 activists nationwide, including 585 participants from LIRC locations.
- **Training of Trainers (ToT):** Two Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions on the Rule of Law, hate speech, and facilitation were conducted for members of 12 LIRCs, training a total of 97 individuals (60 males, 37 females), including 28 government officers, 67 NGO/CBO members, and 2 religious leaders.
- **Media advocacy programs:** Nine media advocacy programs facilitated by DAN TV were organized across strategic locations including Rakwana, Akurana, Batticaloa, Vavuniya, Mannar, Weligama, Negombo, Beruwala, and Ampara.
- **Training on governance and rights:** Twenty-four advocacy sessions focused on Pluralism, Democracy, Rule of Law, Good Governance, and conflict management were conducted in various districts, attended by 1,267 participants (662 males and 605 females).
- **Mitigation programs:** Fifteen mitigation programs were held across districts, including Panduwasnuwara, Bandarawela, Beruwala, Trincomalee, and Vavuniya, engaging a total of 1,517 participants (668 males and 849 females).
- **Exchange visits:** Four exchange visits were organized to bridge cultural divides, with participants traveling from Mawanella to Mannar, Bandarawela to Batticaloa, and Akurana and Weligama to Vavuniya. These exchanges involved a total of 337 LIRC members (234 males and 103 females).
- **Collaborative advocacy campaigns:** Three advocacy campaigns were developed in collaboration with LIRCs, NGOs, and the police, targeting the public in Bandarawela and Mawanella, engaging 217 participants (104 females and 113 males).
- **Interfaith dialogues:** Eleven interfaith dialogues were convened across locations such as Akurana, Rakwana, Addalachenai, Vavuniya, Bandarawela, Mawanella, Negombo, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, and Beruwala and engaged 518 participants, including 262 females and 256 males.

Civil Peace Service Project

The Civil Peace Service (CPS) program, funded by the German Federal Government and implemented through German civil society organizations in collaboration with international partners, aims to foster peace and stability across the countries they work in. This project represents a partnership between NPC and Agiamondo, a Catholic organization, focusing on organizational development to enhance NPC's outreach capacity, knowledge management, and results monitoring. Ten activities targeting organizational development were completed during the year.



Activities & highlights:

- **CPS worker onboarding:** A new CPS worker specializing in communications and outreach joined NPC. This role is pivotal in streamlining the organization's communications strategies, ensuring that NPC's initiatives are effectively shared across diverse platforms.
- **NPC visibility guideline:** This was developed to ensure consistent representation of the National Peace Council's (NPC) brand. It serves as a reference for both NPC staff and partners to maintain clear and professional visibility across all platforms. Adhering to this guideline helps create a uniform and recognizable presence, enhancing NPC's trust and credibility in all its operations.
- **Social research workshop:** Thirty-five NPC staff members participated in a two-day workshop on the significance of social research, conducted by a team from the Social Scientists' Association. This hands-on training encompassed theoretical foundations of research, practical application of various research methods, and culminated in group presentations and feedback sessions to reinforce learning.
- **Project planning sessions:** Twenty-three key NPC staff members engaged in a strategic planning session for the new CPS-NPC initiative, supported by Agiamondo and facilitated by a German M&E specialist. Participants explored the project cycle, beginning with intervention planning. These discussions were instrumental in shaping and refining the CPS intervention to address the Sri Lankan context.
- **MoJo festival:** 10 NPC staff members took part in the **MoJo Festival**, to plan strategic communications for NPC. Participants explored how impactful storytelling can capture project achievements and amplify the voices of target groups while focusing on ethical communication practices.
- **Discussion on current economic situation:** Economist Umesh Moramudali, senior lecturer in Economics at the university of Colombo led this session for all NPC staff members. It aimed to enhance understanding of Sri Lanka's economic landscape and provide insights into future economic trends. Staff gained valuable knowledge on how to navigate economic challenges and capitalize on potential opportunities.
- **Visual storytelling:** A capacity-building workshop for staff was carried out by two freelance filmmakers and MoJo journalists Ruwan Bogamuwa and Asanka Rohana. Participants

learned techniques for collecting and documenting stories through video and photography. The workshop aimed to enhance creativity and collaboration among staff while planning NPC projects supported by Agiamondo for the next three years.



- **Ethics in communication:** A workshop covering this topic was held for all NPC staff. The sessions focused on strengthening ethical communication practices and covered standards and storytelling techniques that respect privacy and integrity, equipping participants with the tools to engage in responsible communication across all NPC projects. Resource persons included senior journalist Lakshman Gunasekara, Professor Minoli Salgado of the Manchester Metropolitan University, and Shashik Silva an independent researcher.
- **Training on story writing:** This was held in Colombo for NPC project staff. The workshop aimed to enhance the writing skills of project staff while reinforcing ethical communication principles. Film director Lakmal Dharmarathne, filmmaker Sharni Jayewardene, and freelance journalist Sureshkumar Jeewaratnam provided resource input. Participants focused on reporting techniques and storytelling that safeguard privacy and uphold integrity, aligning with NPC's commitment to responsible communication.
- **Internal communications and stress management:** NPC staff benefitted from this residential training held in Negombo. It aimed to improve staff capacity in managing internal communications and reducing work-related stress. Participants learned strategies to foster a supportive work environment and improve collaboration, both within NPC and with external partners. The lead facilitation was done by the team Power of Play led by its founder and artistic director Sulochana Dissanayake. Sessions on admin and finance were also held.

Key highlights for 2024

- **Facilitation skills and workshop design:** NPC staff participated in this training which aimed to equip staff with the skills needed to design and facilitate effective workshops. The focus was on developing creative communication strategies for peace and reconciliation efforts, with an emphasis on engaging participants and fostering collaboration. The sessions were facilitated by a cooperate skill development trainer Roshani Azeez, and a consultant from Strategic Inspiration (SIPL) Emikshan Emmanuel.
- **CIMA training on digital transformation in finance:** NPC finance department staff attended this training supported by CPS. The sessions introduced participants to modern digital tools and techniques for improving financial operations and ensured that the finance team stays updated with the latest advancements in their field, enhancing efficiency in NPC's financial management.
- **Using ChatGPT tools effectively:** Three sessions were held at NPC and delivered by Andrea Novellis a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Milan. He is an expert strategist in using AI tools in research. The sessions provided project staff with tools to enhance their use of ChatGPT for project planning and reporting. Participants learned how to use the platform more efficiently, improving productivity and workflow within NPC projects.

Protecting Civic Space in Sri Lanka

Funded by Legal Action Worldwide, this project aims to empower the public—particularly members of grassroots organizations—by educating them about their rights, including freedoms of association and assembly. Implemented across 12 Divisional Secretariat divisions—Kebethigollawa, Hali-Ela, Batticaloa, Chenkanai, Horana, Theldeniya, Dehiowita, Wariyapola, Matara, Monaragala, Welikanda, and Ratnapura—the project successfully completed 74 activities during the reporting period. This initiative plays a vital role in enhancing civic awareness and reinforcing human rights in Sri Lanka.

Activities & highlights:

- **Master Trainers:** A dedicated pool of 72 Master Trainers facilitated training sessions across all districts, spreading the project's core messages and mobilizing community members to engage actively.
- **Capacitation training:** A total of 31 training sessions were conducted, benefiting 775 members of grassroots organizations and empowering them to advocate effectively for their rights.
- **Cohesion activities:** Nine activities were designed to strengthen the principles of freedom of association, human rights, and pluralism, engaging over 500 participants, including youth, Malaiyaha community members, schoolchildren and local officials.
- Key initiatives included:
 - Providing essential civic documentation for Malaiyaha communities.
 - Conducting awareness sessions on youth drug use and offering career guidance for school dropouts.
 - In Anuradhapura, community members volunteered to renovate a road leading to a remote school.
- **Facilitation meetings:** 26 meetings fostered collaboration among grassroots members, youth, and state officials, enhancing communication and understanding.



Key highlights for 2024

This project continues to be instrumental in empowering communities and fostering an inclusive civic space in Sri Lanka.

- **Cohesion activities:** 15 new activities reached 1,000 community members, emphasizing freedoms of association and speech. This included three legal clinics where 20 senior lawyers provided free legal advice to 300 community members in Kebethigollawa, Wariyapola, and Polonnaruwa. Issues addressed included land disputes, discrimination, domestic violence, and child rights violations.
- **Mobile clinics:** Services were offered to Malaiyaha communities to assist in obtaining vital documents such as birth and marriage certificates.
- **Art competitions:** Engaging 1,200 participants—including youth, children, state officials — across 12 project districts, these competitions promoted civic engagement through creative expression.
- **Information sessions:** 17 sessions targeted 425 members of local organic formations, enhancing their understanding of civic rights and responsibilities.
- **Need-based trainings:** In Kalutara, 60 organic formation members participated in two targeted trainings focused on problem identification, analysis, and effective communication skills to address challenges related to freedoms of association and assembly.



Capacitating Transformation

NPC partnered with the Office on Missing Persons (OMP) to strengthen the capabilities of its staff across Sri Lanka's North, East, and South. This initiative featured a series of training workshops centered on pluralism and inclusion frameworks, Transitional Justice (TJ), the provisions of the OMP Act, and the mapping of service delivery processes. Participants also engaged in sessions on nonviolent communication, psychosocial support, and self-care. A targeted series of workshops for 40 OMP staff in Colombo addressed critical topics such as TJ, nonviolent communication, and the principles of pluralism and inclusion.



Activities & highlights:

- **Workshops for government officers:** Five workshops targeting government officials involved in the OMP delivery cycle were conducted in Batticaloa, Jaffna, Matara, Mannar, and Colombo. Each workshop included 20 participants, totaling 100 officers who enhanced their understanding of the OMP processes.
- **Workshops for victim families:** Five workshops for family members of victims were also held in the same locations, each with 20 participants, resulting in an additional 100 participants.
- **Research and briefings:** A research paper summarizing interviews with civil society activists and high-ranking government officials was developed to identify key pathways for improving service delivery. Although not part of the original project proposal, this paper informed subsequent meetings, where senior and mid-level government officers were briefed on addressing victims' issues.
- **Updates on process:** Four regional meetings, each with 50 participants, resulted in a total of 200 government officers receiving important updates on the OMP process.

This project concluded during the reporting period.

Sustaining peace through pluralism and inclusive service delivery

Supported by Freedom House (FH), this project aims to enhance pluralism in the delivery of inclusive services across communities in Sri Lanka. By ensuring that all groups receive effective and equitable services, the initiative seeks to foster sustainable peace without discrimination. The project facilitated the creation of a certificate course titled "Sustainable Peace through Pluralism and Inclusive Service Delivery," offered through four national universities:

Eastern University, Ruhuna University, Sabaragamuwa University, and Jaffna University. This course specifically targets frontline government officers and encompasses five comprehensive modules: Inclusive Service Delivery, Nonviolent Communication, Service Delivery in Plural Societies, Street-Level Bureaucrats and Service Delivery, and Field Practicum.



Activities & highlights:

- **Course Implementation:** The delivery of the certificate course began at the four participating universities, attracting state sector service delivery staff, community leaders, and students interested in the principles of inclusive service delivery. This initiative not only equips participants with essential skills but also promotes an understanding of how to effectively serve diverse communities, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Key highlights for 2024:

Advanced certificate course

University of Ruhuna:

- **Field practicum completion:** 35 students (12 males, 23 females) successfully completed Module 5, alongside their final examinations.

Eastern University:

- **Module 4 completion:** The "Street-Level Bureaucrats and Service Delivery" module was completed by 15 students (10 males, 5 females).
- **Field practicum completion:** 24 students (13 males, 11 females) completed Module 5.

University of Sabaragamuwa:

- **Exams for modules 1 to 4:** 30 students (4 males, 26 females) completed their examinations.

University of Jaffna:

- **Module 4 completion:** Successfully completed the "Street-Level Bureaucrats and Service Delivery" module.

Second phase

- **Residential training program:** A training program focused on service delivery, legal frameworks, physical security, and human rights was conducted for 30 facilitators and human rights defenders from the Malaiyaha community across 10 estates in the Ratnapura District, comprising 14 males and 16 females.
- **Progress review meeting:** A meeting to review the Advanced Certificate Course on Pluralism and Inclusive Service Delivery in Colombo with participation of 16 academics including the course coordinators in the 4 universities and state officers who are students.
- **Practicum research project:** Ten government officials enrolled in the Advanced Certificate Course at the University of Sabaragamuwa completed a 5-day research project across 10 estates/divisions in the Ratnapura District, supported by 30 community facilitators.
- **Stakeholder meetings:** Three meetings were conducted to present and discuss research findings and recommendations with stakeholders, including researchers and community facilitators.
- **Video documentary:** A 30-minute documentary was created to capture the experiences of the Malaiyaha community, highlighting their challenges related to inclusion.
- **Information-sharing sessions:** Three sessions were held in Ratnapura to share findings of the practicum to both top-level (27 officials) and ground-level (113 officials) government representatives, facilitating discussions on the gaps between government officials and the Malaiyaha community.
- **Documentary sharing sessions:** Eight sessions were held across Ratnapura, Kegalle, Hatton, Badulla, Deniyaya, Gampola, Walapane, and Matale. These sessions engaged government officials, media representatives, estate leaders, union leaders, youth leaders, and civil society leaders, with a total of 552 participants to speak on the issues/challenges faced by the Malaiyaha community.
- **Mobile clinics:** Two mobile clinics were organized at Galaboda Estate, Gallella Estate, and Palm Garden Estate in Ratnapura District, assisting 191 beneficiaries with essential document needs, such as birth certificates, national identity cards, death certificates, and marriage certificates.



Women Organized for Inclusion through Community Engagement

The WOICE project, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), operates in seven districts: Matara, Monaragala, Kandy, Nuwara-Eliya, Kegalle, Ratnapura, and Gampaha. Launched in 2022, it aims to empower women civic leaders as activists driving state reform and systemic change through 3 key objectives- amplify women's voices in the reform movement, strengthen advocacy for women's and minority issues and build support for women's leadership in local initiatives. In total 57 activities were carried out through the WOICE project in the reporting period.



Activities & highlights:

- **Partner selection:** Seven district partners were chosen through a thorough vetting process involving local organizations and stakeholders.
- **Training sessions:**
 - A one-day orientation for 35 'Supergroup' members and district coordinators focused on project implementation and women's roles in social movements.
 - A two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop covered democracy, pluralism, gender, and citizenship.
 - Follow-up training reached 140 women, co-facilitated by trained members.
- **Issue mapping:** Seven mapping activities identified key challenges, including women's political underrepresentation and local issues like malnutrition and early marriages.
- **Facilitative meetings:** 21 meetings with former women leaders and local officials addressed 14 local issues, enhancing women's political participation.
- **Community campaigns:** 7,000 women participated in campaigns promoting political involvement and democratic values.

Key highlights for 2024:

- An exchange visit for 49 women leaders and 50 representatives from the Malaiyaha community featured awareness sessions and local tours.
- A Learning and Advocacy Symposium in March 2024 involved 120 women leaders and prominent speakers discussing women's political roles.
- A documentary titled Women Interventions for Political Empowerment showcased women's activism for democracy.
- NED awarded a follow-up grant for Phase 2, expanding to Badulla and Polonnaruwa.
- Capacity-building workshops for 57 'supergroup' members and 105 youth members were conducted in August 2024, focusing on democracy and inclusion.



Open Society Foundations

The Open Society Foundations (OSF) provided crucial support to NPC in addressing national reconciliation, fostering inter-community trust, mobilizing local groups for conflict mitigation, and advocating for transitional justice frameworks. This grant has been instrumental in promoting pluralism and facilitating negotiated political solutions that tackle the root causes of conflict in Sri Lanka. Additionally, it has contributed to the organizational stability of NPC by funding core staff costs, enabling greater flexibility in light of the challenging environment for civil society engagement and limited access to donor support for administrative needs. Through this grant, NPC is streamlining its operations by enhancing administrative systems and staff capacity, while continuing its vital activities aimed at achieving reconciliation, sustainable peace, and a more inclusive national identity.

With OSF's support, NPC is better equipped to navigate the complexities of its mission and contribute to Sri Lanka's journey toward reconciliation and lasting peace.

Activities & highlights:

- **Research and Communication Support:** OSF support enabled the Executive Director to carry out research, write and disseminate his political commentary. In addition, weekly and monthly analyses, press releases, and newsletters were produced in three languages and shared widely through mass media and NPC's website, ensuring broad accessibility.
- **Annual Report Publication:** OSF facilitated the compilation and printing of NPC's 2023 Annual Report, which highlighted the organization's interventions and key achievements from the previous year. This report serves as a vital tool for sharing insights with members, media, donors, and the local diplomatic community, effectively capturing and preserving organizational memory.
- **Staff Capacity Building:** A capacity-building training session engaged 37 staff members, including the Executive Director, Program Advisor, project heads, and the chairperson. The first day focused on a comprehensive overview of NPC's updated Financial and Administration Management manual. On the second day, participants contributed to refining strategic objectives and engaged in team-building exercises designed by various project teams.

Key highlights for 2024:

- **Research and Communication Support:** With support from OSF, the Executive Director was able to publish political commentary and contribute regularly to a national newspaper column. This funding also enabled the production of weekly and monthly analyses, press releases, and newsletters in three languages. These materials were widely disseminated through mass media channels and the NPC website, ensuring broad accessibility and reach.

Food relief through NLEAP

A food relief distribution programme was implemented by NPC under the National Language Equality Advancement Project (NLEAP) and Alinea International with funds from the government of Canada. The project was a onetime activity to assist vulnerable families who were severely by the economic crisis. Food relief care packages were distributed to 350 families in the Batticaloa, Kandy, Monaragala, Mullaitivu and Nuwara Eliya districts. Each care pack included 14 items worth Rs. 14,000. In order to maintain the quality and uniformity of the food packs, NPC partnered with Cargills Food City, which provided the packs through their outlets in the selected areas.

The beneficiaries were selected under certain criteria that included families with only one parent, female headed families, families with nursing mothers, families with pregnant women, families with children 14 years of age and under, families with members who have chronic non-communicable diseases and families who have lost their livelihoods.

The Butterfly Peace Garden in the Batticaloa, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Kandy, Human Rights First Aid Centre in Monaragala, Organization for Elangai Refugees Rehabilitation in the Mullaitivu and Suya Shakthi Foundation in Nuwara Eliya joined the project as partner organizations. The packs were distributed to the neediest in time for Ramadan and the Sinhala and Tamil New Year.



Global Centre for Pluralism

The Global Centre for Pluralism (GCP) is an independent charitable organization, co-founded by His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada. The Centre collaborates with policymakers, educators, and community leaders worldwide to advance and apply the principles of pluralism. In the reporting year, GCP partnered with the National Peace Council (NPC) to organize a series of workshops and information-sharing sessions aimed at NPC staff, Divisional Secretaries, and the NPC Master Trainers network. These sessions focused on the Global Pluralism Monitor (GPM); a tool developed by GCP to evaluate the state of pluralism globally. The GPM framework assesses levels of inclusion and exclusion across political, economic, and social dimensions through 20 indicators and through this workshops/info sharing sessions, the status of several key indicators out of the 20 relevant to Sri Lanka were shared with participants.



The workshops enhanced participants' understanding of the vital role pluralism plays in fostering an inclusive society. Additionally, they highlighted the importance of cultivating a national identity that bridges religious, regional, and political divides.

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Activities & highlights:

- Training for divisional secretaries:** A residential training session was held in Kandy, where 27 Divisional Secretaries and other high-ranking officers from 14 divisional secretariats participated. The session focused on applying the GPM framework in the Sri Lankan context. The event concluded with a panel discussion featuring prominent academics, including: Dr. Chandima Abeysinghe, Senior Lecturer, Department of International Studies, University of Kelaniya, Dr. Kalpa Rajapaksha, Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Peradeniya, Prof. Fazeeha Azmi, Professor of Geography, University of Peradeniya and Prof. Neil DeVotta, Professor of Politics and International Affairs, Wake Forest University.
- Training for NPC staff:** In Colombo, 34 NPC staff members participated in a dedicated training on the GPM framework. The session emphasized the importance of pluralism in diverse societies and featured expert insights from: Prof. Neil DeVotta, Senior Lecturer, Politics & International Affairs, Wake Forest University, and GCP staff Dr. Michael Youash, Senior Manager, Ms. Rajvir Gill and Ms. Andrea González.
- Training for Master Trainers:** A separate training session was conducted for 32 Master Trainers from 11 project locations. The training equipped them with skills to implement the GPM framework in their respective regions. Post-training discussions highlighted the challenges of forming a collective national identity, providing valuable insights into practical obstacles in achieving pluralism.

Projects approved for funding in 2023 – commenced work in 2024:

Mobilising University State Engagement for Reconciliation

This project aims to bridge the disconnect between academic research and state policy implementation in Sri Lanka. By engaging university students, academics, and state actors, it seeks to address societal issues within specific communities. The initiative involves four universities: University of Ruhuna, University of Jaffna, Eastern University, and University of Sabaragamuwa. Awarded to NPC in late 2023, the project is set to span 18 months. This project was awarded to NPC in early 2024 and is supported by GIZ who work in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Prisons Affairs, and Constitutional Reforms (MoJ), paving the way for meaningful engagement between academia and the state.

Key activities for 2024:

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Preliminary field visits were conducted to meet key stakeholders and secure necessary approvals.
- **Community awareness:** Programs were held to discuss findings from the Sri Lanka Barometer, enhancing public understanding of relevant issues.
- **Collaborative workshops:** A two-day program in Colombo focused on identifying culture- and ethnicity-based challenges, fostering strong relationships among university representatives and district officials.
- **Student involvement:** The project team collaborated with various university faculties to select 15 students from each faculty for future activities.

Key activities for 2024:

1. **Project orientation for academics and officials:** Held in Colombo with 25 participants (23 male, 2 female) from multiple universities and district secretariats, this meeting aimed to foster collaboration between academics and government officials.
2. **Student orientation meeting:** 47 participants (17 male, 30 female) from the four universities attended an orientation designed to provide insight into the project.
3. **Facilitation meetings:** Four meetings across the project districts connected research students, mentors, and government officials to support ongoing research initiatives.

People Unite for Justice and Accountability

NPC is spearheading an initiative aimed at fostering long-term reconciliation and peace in Sri Lanka through the PUJA project. Over the course of 36 months, this project seeks to cultivate public support for justice and accountability across ethnic divides by advocating for independent, credible, and victim-centric transitional justice processes. By uniting civil society organizations (CSOs) and harnessing international support, the initiative aims to pressure the state to prioritize truth-telling, memorialization, and the resilient pursuit of justice by victims and survivors. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Right to Life Human Rights Centre (R2L), the Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD), Verité Research and Peace & Community Action (PCA).

Key highlights for 2024:

- **Truth-telling advocacy:** NPC conducted 13 district-based half-day meetings with key networks and participants, reaching 438 individuals (231 male, 207 female).
- **Information sharing sessions:** NPC held 16 district-level sessions with state officers on Transitional Justice (TJ), with 542 participants (277 male, 265 female). Participants included 07 District Secretaries, 03 Assistant District Secretaries, 37 Divisional Secretaries, 11 Assistant Divisional Secretaries and 26 Integration Officers.
- **Media training:** NPC trained 23 journalists (13 male, 10 female) on mindful storytelling about enforced disappearances and human rights violations.
- **Psychosocial support training for HRDs:** NPC trained 61 human rights defenders from NPC's partner networks (28 male, 33 female) on psychosocial support. The target participants included staff from the Centre for Human Rights & Development (CHRD), Peace & Community Action (PCA), and Right to Life (R2L) and NPC.
- **Capacity building:** R2L conducted five meetings for CSOs, journalists, and lawyers on TJ, with 179 participants (110 male, 69 female).
- **Key Informant Interviews:** R2L completed 10 interviews with victims and survivors to document human rights violations.
- **Public advocacy:** R2L published an editorial on "Women, Peace, and Security" and released social media content, including an advocacy video featuring NPC's Executive Director.
- **Truth and Justice Forums:** PCA organized forums and focus groups in the Eastern Province, reaching 103 participants (51 male, 52 female).
- **Capacity building:** PCA trained 105 participants (59 male, 46 female) in Transitional Justice processes, achieving an 88% completion rate.
- **Legal support:** CHRD monitored court appearances in the North and East, reaching 353 participants (343 male, 10 female).
- **Psychosocial support:** CHRD held counseling sessions for 48 individuals and de-stressing activities for 84 participants.
- **Support for litigants:** CHRD provided essential travel and accommodation support for 11 litigants, reaching 22% of the target participants.

Active Citizens for Elections and Democracy

The ACED project, launched during the last quarter of this reporting period, collaborates with four key implementing partners: People's Action for Free and Fair Election (PAFFREL), Association of War Affected Women (AWAW), Centre for Communication Training (CCT), and Women and Democracy (W&D) in the Maldives. Funded by the European Union (EU), the project aims to enhance electoral integrity in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Due to the timing of the grant award, only preliminary administrative activities were completed during this period, which included an internal project review, initial meetings with partners, a review of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework with the donor, and recruitment of staff. This initiative aims to foster active citizenship, improve electoral processes, and enhance democratic participation in both Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Key Highlights for 2024:

- **Voter preferences research:** A comprehensive study titled "Factors Guiding Voter Preferences in Elections" is underway across 25 districts to better understand the influences on voter behavior. NPC is leading this activity.
- **Voter education toolkit:** PAFFREL organized two national consultation meetings for 53 CSO leaders, activists, youth, political party representatives, women leaders, representatives from disability organisations, etc. to revise their voter education toolkit.
- **Utilizing Right to Information (RTI):** 3 trainings on utilizing RTI provisions for transparency in election campaigns held in Kalutara, Galle, and Kandy for 125 media/CSOs/election monitoring/civic groups. Trainings organized by NPC and led by experts in law and election related provisions.
- **Baseline survey:** Conducted in Kalutara, Galle, Kandy, and Nuwara Eliya, with plans for further surveys in additional districts.
- **Political literacy training:** CCT conducted an orientation for 100 CSOs and network members in the central highlands, emphasizing political literacy. Additionally, 10 voter registration/ documentation clinics were held in selected estate divisions.
- **Provincial workshops for women:** AWAW conducted workshops in Kandy, Kurunegala, and Anuradhapura, targeting women political leaders across parties in the North Western and Central Provinces. These workshops led to the formation of three coalitions of women political leaders for advocacy efforts. A total of 92 women leaders participated.
- **Advocacy for women's representation in the Maldives:** W&D is drafting a proposal to advocate for a legislative and voluntary quota for women, developing a detailed voter education program to reach 5,000 marginalized women and youth across 10 atolls and prepared bilingual posters in English and Dhivehi for an upcoming social media campaign.
- **Training on toolkit:** PAFFREL facilitated two trainings for 66 district level CSOs leaders on the voter education tool kit. Districts covered include Kurunegala, Puttalam, Trincomalee, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Batticaloa, Ampara-Digamadulla, Vavuniya, Trincomalee
- **Advocacy meeting:** One advocacy meeting was organized for 33 relevant stakeholders in PAFFREL networks including CSO leaders, representatives from election monitoring organisations, youth etc. in August to discuss the electoral process and prepare for elections.

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):

Enforcement of accountability must become a national priority (15.01.2023)

The importance of accountability in governance has become manifest both nationally and internationally in the Supreme Court decision with regard to the Easter bombing and the Canadian government's sanctions for human rights violations respectively. The Supreme Court has determined that former president Maithripala Sirisena and four senior members of the security hierarchy are liable for negligence in their responsibilities which led to loss of life and limb to more than five hundred innocent persons. This is a landmark decision in a context in which impunity and lack of accountability has been marked in the public life of the country.

Uncertainty over the holding of local government elections needs to end (2023.03.10)

Uncertainty over the postponement of local government elections continues to grow. Recent statements by government leaders and debates in parliament show them openly expressing the view that elections at this time would not be conducive to either economic growth or advantageous to them, and so ought not to be held. This follows the postponement of local government elections scheduled for March 9 due to the failure of the government treasury to release the required funds for the elections. It is important that government departments should cooperate with the Election Commission when it has declared elections as mandated by the Constitution.

Anti-terrorism bill fails to meet democratic standards (09.04.2023)

The government has decided to delay presenting its proposed Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) to parliament. The National Peace Council welcomes this decision and urges the government to reconsider its presentation as it would impact negatively on the democratic space and rights available to political parties, trade unions and civic activists. In any legal reform, the fundamental rights and protection of citizens need to be guaranteed. After all, the power of the people is shared with the government for their benefit as per the constitution. The ATA fails to achieve both these objectives. The draft ATA presented by the government has several features that are worse than the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) it is intended to replace.

Do not go down the path to suppression of media freedoms (03.06.2023)

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is the world's standard bearer on civil and political rights. It was incorporated into Sri Lankan law in a manner that has permitted successive governments to misuse it. The arrest and detention of comedian Natasha Edirisooriya under the ICCPR Act has become another unfortunate example of the misuse of a law meant to protect human rights by the government. Previous targets have included poets and novelists who have addressed social and political controversies.

FINANCES

Financial Report



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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 2023, 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.

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 2023, 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: D K Hulangamuwa FCA FCMA LLB (London), A P A Gunasekera FCA FCMA, Ms. Y A De Silva FCA, Ms. G G S Manatunga FCA, W K B S P Fernando FCA FCMA, B E Wijesuriya FCA FCMA, R N de Saram ACA FCMA, Ms. N A De Silva FCA, N M Sulaiman FCA FCMA, Ms. L K H L Fonseka FCA, Ms. P V K N Sajewani FCA, A A J R Perera FCA ACMA, N Y R L Fernando ACA, D N Gamage ACA ACMA, C A Yalagala ACA ACMA, B Vasanthan ACA ACMA

Principals: T P M Ruberu FCMA FCCA MBA (USJ-SL), G B Goudian ACMA, Ms. P S Paranavitane ACA ACMA LLB (Colombo), D L B Karunathilaka ACMA, W S J De Silva Bsc (Hons) - MIS Msc - IT, V Shakhivel B.Com (Sp), W D P L Perera ACA

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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.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

As required by section 163 (2) of the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007, we have obtained all the information and explanations that were required for the audit and, as far as appears from our examination, proper accounting records have been kept by the Organization.

24 September 2024
Colombo

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2023

ASSETS	Note	2023 Rs.	2022 Rs.
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	4	109,172,976	97,703,772
Intangible Assets	5	201,142	232,774
		<u>109,374,118</u>	<u>97,936,546</u>
Current Assets			
Receivables	6	2,893,678	11,719,671
Cash and Bank Balances	7	64,191,485	63,957,948
		<u>67,085,163</u>	<u>75,677,619</u>
Total Assets		<u>176,459,281</u>	<u>173,614,165</u>
FUNDING & LIABILITIES			
Accumulated Funds			
Restricted Funds	12	16,705,270	25,242,398
Unrestricted Funds	9	531,647	11,744,538
Reserve A	10	15,813,699	10,579,838
Reserve B	11	16,149,721	16,094,442
Revaluation Reserves		97,446,080	84,379,680
		<u>146,646,417</u>	<u>148,040,896</u>
Non-Current Liabilities			
Staff Welfare Fund	13	725,853	725,853
Retirement Benefit Liability	8	15,456,283	11,634,371
Deferred Liability	14	2,528,742	2,643,497
		<u>18,710,878</u>	<u>15,003,721</u>
Current Liabilities			
Income Tax Payable	20.3	7,474,631	6,152,655
Payables	15	3,627,355	4,416,893
		<u>11,101,986</u>	<u>10,569,548</u>
Total Funding and Liabilities		<u>176,459,281</u>	<u>173,614,165</u>

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



Finance Manager

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

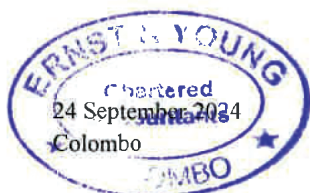


Director



Director

The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 20 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (Guarantee) Limited

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 Rs.	2022 Rs.
Incoming Resources	16	278,076,995	265,015,632
OPERATING EXPENDITURE			
Project Expenses	17	(278,076,995)	(265,015,632)
Total Operating Expenditure		<u>(278,076,995)</u>	<u>(265,015,632)</u>
Net Surplus/ (Deficit) on Operating Activities		-	-
Revenue Earned from Other Activities	18	5,330,767	18,686,336
Administrative Expenses	17.1	(7,067,056)	(4,624,941)
Finance Cost	19	(92,880)	(209,067)
Net Surplus/ (Deficit) Before Tax		<u>(1,829,169)</u>	<u>13,852,328</u>
Income Tax Expenses	20.2	(4,094,582)	(2,472,606)
Net Surplus/ (Deficit) After Tax		<u>(5,923,752)</u>	<u>11,379,722</u>
Other Comprehensive Income			
Revaluation Gain/Loss on Land and Building	4.1	13,066,400	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		<u><u>7,142,648</u></u>	<u><u>11,379,722</u></u>

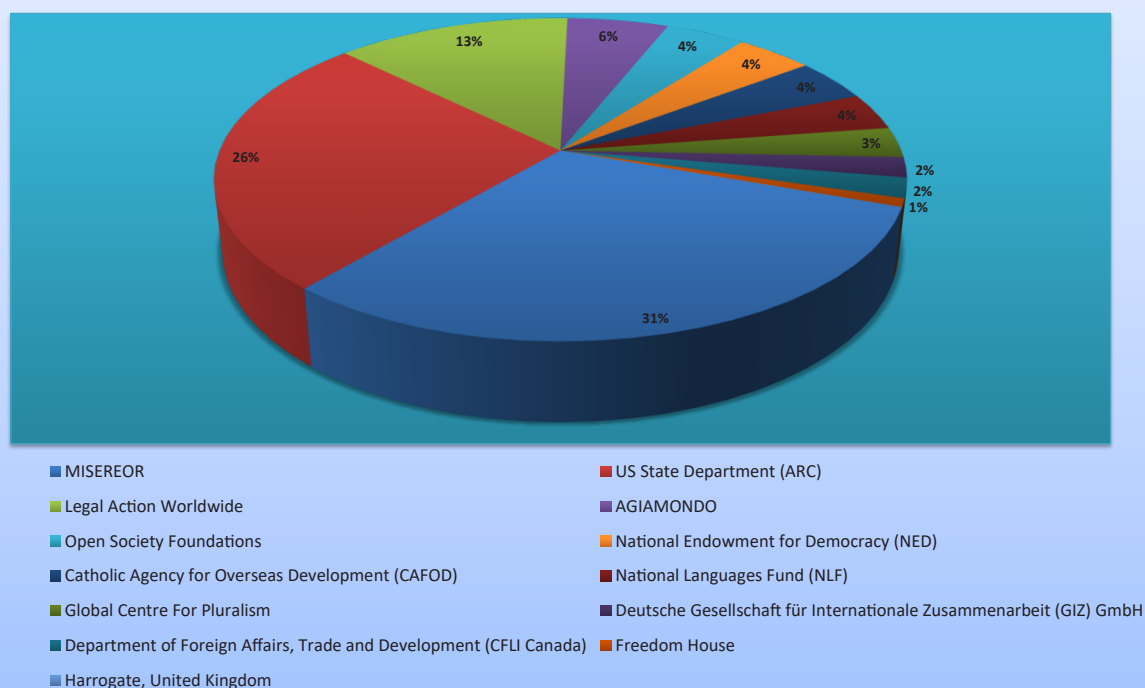
The accounting policies and notes on pages 07 through 20 form an integral part of the Financial Statements.



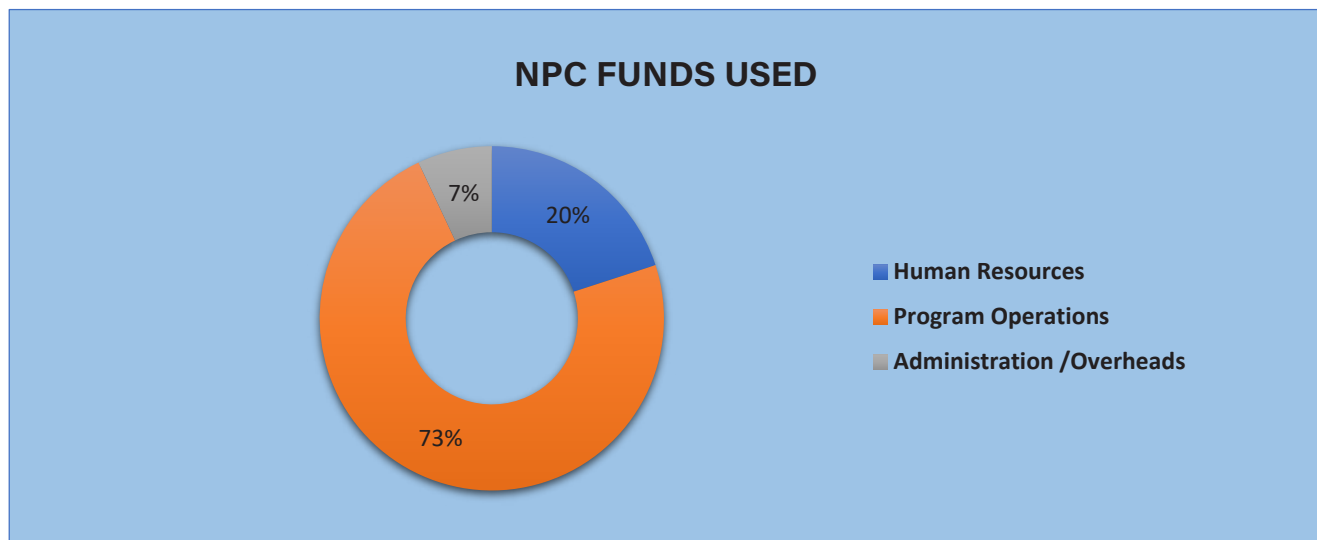
Funding Portfolio

Name of donor	Amount (LKR)	Percentage
MISEREOR	82,634,850	30.67%
US State Department (ARC)	70,447,851	26.14%
Legal Action Worldwide	35,086,880	13.02%
AGIAMONDO	15,138,909	5.62%
Open Society Foundations	11,919,912	4.42%
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	11,484,000	4.26%
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)	11,460,000	4.25%
National Languages Fund (NLF)	9,925,625	3.68%
Global Centre For Pluralism	8,177,732	3.03%
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	5,439,041	2.02%
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (CFLI Canada)	5,398,579	2.00%
Freedom House	2,207,834	0.82%
Harrogate, United Kingdom	145,526	0.05%
TOTAL	269,466,739.00	100.00%

SOURCES OF FUNDING IN 2023



Funds Utilisation



THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 PARTNERS AND DONORS

Major Donors



Way Forward - Looking to the future

Sri Lanka is at the crossroads where the political challenge is how to transition to a new government while staying within the constitutional framework. The election of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has opened up vistas of change. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake comes from outside the mainstream political parties that have dominated Sri Lanka's political life. More than any other candidate, Anura Kumara Dissanayake represented the spirit of the Aragalaya protest movement of 2022 which called for "system change" and for new faces in politics. Which is also why he won.

One of the special features of the election campaign was the bid to win over the ethnic and religious minorities which was not the case at the last set of national elections five years ago where the successful candidate espoused narrow ethnic majoritarian views and concerns and secured the vote of the ethnic majority population. Sri Lanka is presently witnessing a positive transformation of electoral politics in relation to its long standing ethnic conflict. However, during the period of economic collapse, the youth saw how narrow ethnic nationalism had been used by corrupt government leaders to come to power. The notion that the country required a "system change" was promoted by the student-led protest movement that publicly eschewed racism and upheld the rights of equal citizenship in their slogans.

Achieving a bipartisan and multi-party consensus on resolving the problems of ethnic and religious minorities has historically been a challenge for Sri Lanka. Among the key areas identified for advancing national reconciliation is power sharing. The 13th Amendment provides a framework for devolution. But its full implementation has been hindered by political resistance to devolving powers to the ethnic and religious minorities. Civil society too has a critical role in fostering a national consensus for reforms that benefit the ethnic and religious minorities. NPC is presently engaged with other civil society groups to take the process of working towards a more inclusive dialogue on the issue.

Transitional justice is another critical aspect of reconciliation. Sri Lanka's efforts in this area have been met with mixed reactions. The government has taken steps to address issues such as missing persons, reparations, and accountability for human rights violations, but progress has been slow, and the outcomes have often fallen short of international standards. The normalization of military presence in the North and East, ensuring equitable military and police practices are vital steps that need more attention and urgency. Addressing these issues is not only a matter of justice but also a prerequisite for building trust among communities that have been deeply scarred by the conflict.

Equal protection under the law is another area that needs strengthening. This includes enforcing language equality, ending caste-based discrimination, and ensuring that religious and cultural diversity is respected throughout the country. Economic equity must also be promoted by providing equal employment opportunities and access to state facilities, especially in the North and East. The marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities, as well as caste-based discrimination, continue to pose significant challenges to social cohesion in Sri Lanka. The Malaiyaha Tamil community, in particular, who were deprived of their citizenship at the time of Independence and remain marginalized, must also be included in the reconciliation process.

Finally, good governance is indispensable for reconciliation. Strengthening the judiciary, ensuring the rule of law, and combating corruption are all necessary to build trust between the state and the people. The creation of independent institutions and the protection of public officers' tenure are also critical for maintaining transparency and accountability in governance. Good governance is the foundation upon which national reconciliation must be built. In the coming period, NPC will be putting its shoulder to the wheel with renewed hope in a national transformation that is within arm's length.



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