

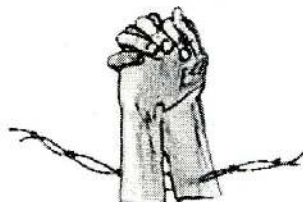
AN EXPLORATION OF KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE & PRACTICES
WOMEN & CONFLICT



**ASSOCIATION OF
WAR AFFECTED WOMEN**

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An Exploration of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Women and Conflict Introduction

This pilot project which was carried out successfully in 6 months to explore the grassroots level women's agency for peace building was done in partnership with Women Defining Peace. Women Defining Peace (WDP) is a project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and implemented by a consortium of World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Cowater International and Match International Centre.

For this project 60 women were selected, 10 from each of the 6 local level women's organizations from Galle, Matara and Kalutara - Tsunami affected districts of the south of Sri Lanka.

The activities entailed initial meetings for identifying and mapping the activities and thereafter a series of staggered workshops on active listening, leadership, conflict identification and resolution, as well as discussions on women's perspective on the ethnic conflict and exploring the humanitarian aspect of people's engagement in Tsunami relief. The project also enabled 5 women from each of the 6 organizations to meet in Galle to look into the possibility of coalition building and networking as well as to share knowledge and experiences.

One of the key aspects of this project was exchange visits. Three special areas of Sri Lanka, namely Puttalam, Ampara, Kantale and Trinco were selected for this purpose. All these areas were selected as areas and districts where all three communities live in light of many complexities and issues, and where conflict further fueled communal disharmony and deepened the inequalities of the communities.

Our special thanks go to Field Director and staff of Women Defining Peace project for their advice and support. For the facilitators, Thilaka Weerakoon, U.M.G. Chandra, Nawas Mohamed and Monica Alfred for their excellent facilitation. We also thank the active women of Ruhunu Sisila, Samagi Matara, Lak Kantha and Govi Kantha of Galle and Diriya and Pre School of Kalutara, for joining us on this unique journey and making us proud of their change and the service that they will render to the society. We also want to thank the management of Polhena Reef, Insight, Ahangama, Tangerine Kalutara, Amaya Reef and Lady Hill of Galle for their kind cooperation. We also want to thank all women of Puttalam Praja Diriya Padanama, Miss Seetha and women of Ampara, Sinhala Tamil Rural Organization of Kantale and Mogana Weeraiah and women of Veeranagar Rural Women's Development Society for their cooperation and willingness to work with us in the future. A special thanks goes to our adviser Somenath Parua for all his cooperation and Sarath Weeraseka and our staff for helping us in numerous ways to make the workshops possible. We thank Wasanthi Weerasekara and Miss Weerakoon for reporting.

This publication would not have been possible without the hard work of Ranjani Premerathana, Chaya Ranaweera, Wasana Rathnayake and Yamuna Harshani of our office, our sincere thanks to all.



The project aimed towards:

- Building leadership, dialogue and listening skills of women participants
- Increased understanding of the nature of the conflict and root causes among predominantly Sinhalese women of South
- Increased awareness of the impacts of the conflict and issues of Tamil and Muslim women of the east
- Linking protracted conflict in the East to everyday lives of women in the South
- Mobilization of women from sectors which are not traditionally involved in peace building or human rights work

Organizations which were chosen as partners

Matara District – Ruhunu Sisila Social Service Organization
Samagi Women's Organization

Galle District – Navodya Dakshina Lanka Kantha Sangamaya
Lak Kantha Govi Sangamaya

Kalutara District – The Pre School Foundation
Diriya Women's Organization

1. ENTRY LEVEL –ONE DAY WORKSHOPS

Initially, 20 persons participated from each organization. 10 women from the 20 were then chosen through one on one interview and questionnaires. During this one day meeting they were given an outline of the activities which were discussed at length to map future project activities.

2. FACILITATED DIALOGUE – TWO DAY WORKSHOP

Matara District

The first two day workshop was held at the Matara Polhenta Reef Hotel on the 8th and 9th of August 2008, presided over by the Chair of the Association of War Affected Women – Visaka Dharmadasa. She stated that one of the main reasons for the present critical situation in our country is that we don't "listen" to others. She also emphasized that we who are constantly discussing the short comings of people and situations never focus on the positive aspect of things. President of the Ruhuna Sisila Organization, Madam Thilaka Weerakoon of Matara District and the Manager of the Business and Vocational Development Institution Madam U. M. G. Chandra of Galle District participated as resource persons.



Kalutara District

This workshop which was held on the 13th and 14th of August 2008 at the Kalutara Bomaluwa Agricultural Department In-service Training Center, was facilitated by the same resource persons.



Galle District

This two day workshop was held on the 15th and 16th of August 2008 at the Ladyhill Hotel in Galle. These workshops were conducted by the same resource persons focusing the same themes as the previous two workshops.



Sessions in detail

Content of the Workshops

First Day

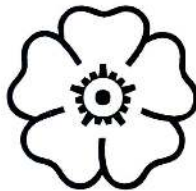
- My flower exercise - Identification of talents
- '4H' for personal success
- Situations faced by women in times of disaster
- Towards a successful leadership as a woman
- Leadership and communication

Second Day

- Discussion on active and inactive listening
- Role play presented by the resource persons.
- Role play presented by the participants.

Session 1:

My Flower exercise



Objectives of the session:

- Identifying the different talents and abilities within individuals of the organization.
- To understanding one's current personal situation as a woman by providing the opportunity to reflect.
- Confirming one's own understanding of one's goals for the future, as a woman in social service
- Identifying expectations from the workshops

The information provided by the participants to complete the five petals of the flower, gave us an idea of the level of success of our action plan.

Kalutara district

Participants of Diriya Kantha Child Development Foundation identified the following talents

- Singing / dancing / recital
- Processing plans
- Working to achieve goals.

- Ability to convince
- Commitment / Perseverance / Enthusiasm
- Ability to listen and understand.
- Ability to work as a mediator.
- Book keeping in the office
- Gaining trust
- Ability to get organized
- Skill of being able to present anything in front of others.
- Ability to function productively as a wife and mother within the home
- Being able to live as an exemplarily individual
- Enthusiasm to save
- Involved in self employment
- Skill of making a good sale.
- Being loved and accepted by others
- Skill of being able to speak appropriately to the situation and the person.

Participants of National Pre-school Foundation identified the following talents

- Forming and operating groups
- Singing / recital / public speaking etc
- Creative skills
- Ability to build a mutual trust
- Ability to manage a crowd
- Skill in organizing workshops (suitable to small groups)
- Being able to maintain a loan debt at 95%
- Increasing the number of pre school teachers who are diploma holders
- Ability to conduct academic programmes in a way that they would understand
- Commitment
- Working on time
- Working according to a structure



Participants of both organizations identified the following major individual future goals and expectations from the workshop.

Future goals	Expectations from the workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Providing good services to society * Becoming a good mediator * Share knowledge with others * Be considered respectful by others * Taking the organization to a very high standard * Increase organizational membership * Being a good wife, mother, daughter * Be in the forefront of society as a successful woman * Be committed to peace * Live in friendship with neighbors * Help those women who have lost their husbands fighting in the army * Supporting the development of the village and the country * Leading a healthy life * Working towards becoming a developed person * Getting positive results through social work * Become a talented woman working for the benefit of others * Express ideas openly for peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Gain maximum knowledge * Getting support from individuals to develop the organization * Gaining experience * Make maximum use of time contributing actively to every task * Use the knowledge gained to develop personal strength * Gain necessary knowledge to be able to come forward to work towards peace and problem solving * Learning unknown things from others * Commitment participating every day * Identify what can be done as a woman to bring meaning to peace * Exchange ideas * Getting to know new people and amassing new experiences when traveling to new places * Working in collaboration with other districts

Galle district

Participants of Galle Udugama Lak Kantha Agri Organization identified the following talents and skills:

- Talented in sports
- Skills in listening
- Ability to protect others
- Facing challenges
- Controlling small children
- Home gardening / growing flowers / producing sweet meets
- Ability to keep every one happy
- Ability to market any product quickly
- Working as a team
- Singing songs
- Working according to a structure
- Making maximum use of time
- Getting women together and encouraging them
- Making savings
- Ability to create awareness in others through social service activities
- Ability to bring every one together within a short space of time.
- Bearing leadership
- Ability to understand others
- Ability to come forward
- Ability to remain strong with self confidence
- Performing given tasks at with utmost commitment
- Efficiency



Participants of Galle Dakshina Lanka Navodya Woman's Foundation identified the following talents and skills:

Talents of the participants

- Ability to write and remember
- Ability to do something as soon as it is seen
- Ability to face challenges
- Working together with groups
- Ability to get people's attention
- Controlling people
- Performing any given task to the maximum ability
- Public speaking
- Presenting creatively
- Working on time
- Working as suitable to the occasion

Participants of both organizations identified the following major individual future goals and expectations from the workshop.

Future goals	Expectations from the workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Share the knowledge I gain with others ⇒ Use the acquired knowledge of leadership for future betterment ⇒ Work towards ending conflict and building peace. ⇒ Achieve peace by making women who are working together aware of the negative impacts of the war. ⇒ To use the lessons learnt from this workshop to bring peace as women and also to work for the betterment of women. ⇒ Becoming a good social worker. ⇒ Taking leadership in village level organizations. ⇒ Give every support possible towards creating a peaceful society. ⇒ Educating society on how to create a peaceful society, free from war. ⇒ Protecting rights of women. ⇒ Provide an understanding of the community by getting to know it in detail oneself. ⇒ Provide the women of the South the opportunity to work towards peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Gain women's contribution for peace building ⇒ Gaining knowledge ⇒ Helping to solve different problems. ⇒ Broadening knowledge ⇒ To work in a project that is beneficial to society. ⇒ Create a strong women's network. ⇒ Adding new experiences to life. ⇒ Awareness of the war. ⇒ Providing women with knowledge and understanding about how to achieve peace ⇒ Creating a process where people are taught to accept the need for peace ⇒ Gaining an understanding of leadership



Matara district

Matara District – Ruhunu Sisila Social Service Organization
Samagi Women's Organization

Common talents of the participants

- Teaching the Tamil language
- Making carpets
- Producing handwork
- Baking.

Participants of both organizations identified the following major individual future goals and expectations from the workshop

Future goals	Expectations from the workshop
⇒ Take the organization to a higher standard ⇒ Respect the law ⇒ Become a good and useful person to society ⇒ Become a good public speaker ⇒ Taking leadership in village level organizations. ⇒ Give every support possible towards creating a peaceful society. ⇒ Achieve peace by making women who are working together aware of the negative impacts of the war ⇒ To use the lessons learnt from this work shop to bring peace as women and also to work for the betterment of women. ⇒ Provide the women of the South the opportunity to work towards peace. ⇒ Assisting women who are distressed in society. ⇒ Assisting those who are displaced by war. ⇒ Minimize the abuse and violations against women and children. ⇒ Create awareness of women's and child rights. ⇒ Identify women who are suffering and discuss their problems.	⇒ Gain maximum knowledge ⇒ Share the knowledge with others ⇒ Use the acquired knowledge of leadership for a better future ⇒ Gain an understanding about the war. ⇒ Gaining an understanding of leadership. ⇒ Sharing experiences. ⇒ Bringing peace to the country as women by educating women in all organizations. ⇒ Being committed to social service by obtaining knowledge on how to be a good leader, ⇒ Realizing our mistakes when solving problems when going over the tsunami experiences and ensuring so that these mistakes do not occur again. ⇒ Adapting the lifestyle according to the different paths this project has taken. ⇒ Do something for the development of myself and others with the knowledge gained ⇒ Identify what is necessary for peace for all, throughout the country ⇒ Identifying people's natures in, natural Disasters

Future goals	Expectations from the workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Extending support as a woman towards ending the war and bringing peace to the country. ⇒ Work free from prejudice against religion, race or cast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Do what is necessary to make life a success by listening ⇒ Gain necessary knowledge and assistance to bring about peace and co existence in society ⇒ Learn what can be done for women who have suffered from war and the tsunami

Session 2: 4H for Success (Carried out in all 3 districts)

Critical questions

In this session the use of 4H's: Head, hand, heart, health was analyzed. The session centered around a number of critical questions including:

How well do we use the senses (brain, eyes and ears, hands, feet) for our own success? How positive are our attitudes? As women have we made use of our creative, conceptual and logical skills for our own success? How successful are we at understanding what we hear with our ears? Do we attempt to observe analytically what we see with our eyes? As women, how many do we attract by way of speaking. Have we used our attitudes for our success? How much our education, our family background, our society, our beliefs, societal attitudes of women, the barriers that the society has created unintentionally have been an obstacle for our attitudes to be positive? How much effort do we put in to developing our own skills? How much space do we have for developing our skills? Do we make use of these? Have we evaded opportunities we have been given?

Even though we live in a country where health facilities are good, by our negligence we create many health problems for ourselves. Space was created for the participants to reflect on situations where they thought about this and also how many opportunities they have missed in advancing themselves.

The participants expressed that their success rate is even less than 50% when considering their personal development as an individual. They stated, as an example, that if they had made an attempt to listen to their teacher in school, today they would be more knowledgeable. They took their own families as examples to show how false beliefs and wrong attitudes have hindered the opportunities to succeed for girls and women where self esteem and confidence are concerned.

By the end of this session the participants observed that this workshop should be made available to school children as well. An important fact they expressed was their enthusiasm to develop their own patience in order to be able to listen to others more attentively.

Session 3: Leadership (Carried out in all 3 districts)

Objective of the session

Making the participants understand how they should organize themselves to become productive and outstanding women leaders in society.

Activity: A discussion was held on the qualities necessary for successful leadership as a woman. The participants were given the opportunity to present one leadership quality each. While 10 points were given for coming up with a quality, the repetition of a quality resulted in the reduction of 10 points. A very close competition between the groups ensued.

were given for coming up with a quality, the repetition of a quality resulted in the reduction of 10 points. A very close competition between the groups ensued.

Through this activity the participants became aware of the qualities and skills they should possess to become leaders. They understood their present situation as leaders by way of analyzing their qualities through SWOT analysis. They described the Strengths they should develop, Weaknesses they should give up, Opportunities that they should make use of and the Threats they should overcome.

SWOT analysis - The situations commonly faced and identified by the participants in the Galle district are stated below :

Strengths

- The experiences gained and the popularity achieved by working with the people over a number of years.
- Academic education and the knowledge gained through experience
- Support given by husband and children
- Ability to gain community contribution
- Ability to build a trust
- Mutual relationships which are developed
- Being methodical
- Having patience when problems arise
- Acceptance by others because of the family background

Weaknesses

- Impatience when dealing with one another.
- Not giving due respect to the ideas of others.
- Contriving to achieve only your own ideas
- Lack of transparency in activities
- Not punctual
- Not making maximum use of one's own skills
- Inability to accept defeat

Opportunities

- Working with different organizations
- Being able to get support from others due to the ability of identifying their talents.
- Support gained from international organizations to achieve our goals

Threats

- Several organizations working together for the same goal within the same space.
- Inability to complete projects and activities due to natural disasters and hazards
- Laws/regulations imposed by the Government periodically

By the end of the session the participants expressed that they were able to understand clearly their status as social activists.

Below hand out on leadership was distributed at the end of the discussion.

HANDOUT

Introducing leadership

- The leader
- Styles of leadership
- Characteristics and qualities of leadership
- Skills which need to be developed as a leader

The leader

- Gives life to ideas and wishes of others
- Is able to retain the leadership because of one's qualities.
- Would point out a mistake
- Knows how to take action
- Would make use of other's good qualities.
- Would respect all
- Would create a attractive atmosphere to work
- Would come up with concepts
- Would obtain suggestions from others
- Inclusiveness
- Work amicably within the team
- Work for the welfare of others
- Overcome barriers successfully
- Would work successfully towards achieving goals
- Complete any task within a given time frame

Leadership is consists of 3 styles

- Dictatorial Leadership
- Democratic Leadership
- Passive/Inactive leadership

Dictatorial Leader

- Manipulate the team according to her will
- manipulating followers to achieve one's own goals
- Do not listen to followers ideas
- Do not allow followers to build upon their talents and skills creatively
- Use authority
- Do not consider the feelings of the followers.

Democratic Leader

- Work with a deep understanding of resources and taking into consideration the important ideas of others
- Share the responsibility of the tasks.
- Give priority to ideas generated through discussion rather than to one's own.
- Will create space to highlight creative talents of others.
- Will not control others, rather will provide the environment for them to work freely

Passive Leader

- No commitment towards own work.
- No expectation of achieving goals of the team
- Will think that others will do one's work
- Will not obtain others' ideas.
- Lack of management skills
- Will take unilateral decisions
- Does not listen
- Not methodical.
- Wish that someone will take the leadership.
- Will not make maximum use of time
- Will not try to understand anything

Qualities of Leadership

Knowledge
Judgment
Intelligent
Wisdom
Honest
Fullness
Genuine
Law abiding
Consistent
Just
Direct
Moral
Determined
Flexible
Objective
Leading
Self confident
Make independent decisions
Planning
Evaluation
Patience

Characteristics of leadership

Motivated
Positive attitudes
Generous
Generous
Committed
Prompt action
Patience / kindness
Ability
Oratory skills
Literary skills
Considerate
Friendly
Attachment
Loyal
Public relations
Listening
Organizational capacity
Ability to establish
Creative
Appreciation
Work to a time frame
Face challenges

Skills to be developed as a leader

- Ability to respect others
- Ability to listen to others
- Ability understand the problems of others
- Ability to keep others united.
- Ability the responsibilities of others.
- Ability to control others with determination
- Ability to take decisions
- Ability to be complete tasks
- Ability to teach others.
- Ability work amicably and successfully with individuals and organizations
- Ability to share resources
- Ability to identify resources
- Ability to handle resources properly

Leadership and power

- Formal Power - According to the position held
- Power to offer benefits - Ability to provide benefits to followers
- Constraining power - Power to punish those who do not follow
- Power of merit - Having followers and uplifting their strength and efforts
- Specialized power - Ability to influence others, through the specialized power

Ideas expressed at the evaluation

- Participants were able to learn many things
- Participants expressed understanding and satisfaction experimenting new methodologies.
- Getting the opportunity to learn practically about what can be implemented on the field
- Positive thinking
- Understanding that one of the reasons for being backward due to not having made use of available opportunities
- Realized that we have kept aside our talents and skills and are living in an attitude of dependency

Session 4: Active and Inactive listening

Objectives of the session

- ⇒ Providing the opportunity to realize how problems arise at home due to inactive listening
- ⇒ Making the participants realize that country's problems have aggravated due to the inability of listening actively thus not understanding others problems.
- ⇒ Understanding as women that there is a lot that can be done for peace, through active listening and getting to know the necessities of each other.

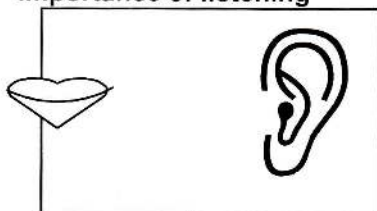
Active and inactive listening response

Step 1: Participants were made to assess the situation after tsunami

The first steps of alleviating the stressful situations were :

- Friendship
- Warm welcome
- Building trust
- Active listening
- Sensitive response

Step 2: Diagram was shown representing a small mouth and a big ear to emphasize the importance of listening



Step 3: Active Listening using case study of a girl in a depressed situation

What should be done?

Objective is to approach the girl who is sad and make her feel comfortable thus gaining her trust gradually.

Steps:

- ⇒ Offer her a seat
- ⇒ Sit close to her
- ⇒ Give her space to talk about her grief
- ⇒ Do not break the eye contact with her
- ⇒ Do not interrupt when she is talking
- ⇒ If she is speaking of the death of a family member repeatedly, let her do it.
- ⇒ Listen actively

- ⇒ Listen actively
- ⇒ Listen with empathy
- ⇒ Let her know she is not alone

Tips on sensitive responses

- ⇒ Give only short responses to what she says
- ⇒ Support and encourage her to tell her story
- ⇒ Show her that you trust her
- ⇒ Do not give her long explanations and advices
- ⇒ Give approval to her words by nodding the head in agreement
- ⇒ Assist building her self confidence by giving her short positive responses
- ⇒ Do not take notes in front of her.
- ⇒ use your skills of psychosocial wellbeing and engage in active listening and sensitive responses.
- ⇒ But if they are under heavy emotional and mental strain, they should be referred for counseling.
- ⇒ If a person is suffering from acute depression, he/she should be referred to a psychiatric.



As a Facilitator one should always:	<u>What Facilitator should NOT do</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust • Provide space to express problems with empathy • Indicate that they are not alone • State that you are prepared to help her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupt when they are expressing ideas • Do not show impatience. • Prevent yourself from showing anger for time consuming

The negative results of not listening and the positive results of listening were discussed taking a family problem as an example. While providing the opportunity for them to share each others experiences in detail, reactions about individuals who were silent were observed.

The resource persons presented a role play in relation to active listening. While this gave the participants the opportunity to analyze positive aspects of it, they came up with the list below:

- That unnecessary problems arise due to inactive listening such as mistrust within family
- Children going astray due to not being listened to and the trust they have in their mother eroding.
- Inability to perform tasks entrusted to one successfully.
- Not getting the opportunity to understand correctly.
- The current hostile situation in the country generally has been created through lack of listening.

- Respect through listening to each other and having the ability to build trust and relationships.
- The country is at war because of problems getting worse due to not listening to issues of communities.
- By understanding that there are different necessities and fulfilling them also has to be done in different ways will help women to resolve conflicts in domestic sphere at the community level and in the country.
-

Step 4: Participants were made to enact role plays on active and inactive listening

Role play 1: Active listening

The distressed woman comes to meet the community leader. The community leader watches with sympathy and greet her with a soft smile. Offers her a seat and sits close and facing her. The community leader displays compassion and is prepared to listen to what the woman has to say. The woman goes on saying her story amidst crying and lamenting. The community leader allows her to cry and listens patiently to her lamentations. Utters statements to lessen the grief and tells her to come at any time. The woman goes away feeling better.

Role play 2: Inactive listening

The distressed woman comes to meet the community leader. She sees the woman coming but continues to read the paper she was reading. Looks from above the spectacles and indicates a chair with the head. She looks at the watch and pays attention to her desk, not to the woman. She also talks on the phone while laughing loud. Tells oneself something irrelevant.

The distressed woman goes on talking. She stops talking briefly and looks at the community leader. The community leader rubs up her forehead and shows sleepiness. Yawns, stretches and shows the woman that she has sat there for long enough. The woman who has come to get some relief, understands that this was not the right place to come. She leaves from there thinking, "You don't understand my problem".

An instance of active listening (case study)

A mother, father and daughter who, on tsunami day, had come away from home to go to a function at a relative's house, get caught to the tsunami at the Matara bus stand. They arrived at the Matara bus station at about 9am on tsunami day and were waiting there till a bus arrived. Yet the huge wave that came unexpectedly left them injured and bereft. The villagers who had heard of the tsunami and arrived in the town, cared for and took to hospital all those who were injured, treating every one alike, regardless of religion, race, cast or physical appearance.

After about a month, the father and daughter having got better were reunited with help of the hospital staff. Subsequently with the mediation of the doctors, they were able to find out that the mother was in the Colombo General hospital. The father and daughter stayed with a relative for 3 months and 4 days, until the mother could be released from hospital and then they returned home. But there was no home. She and the husband met with the village officer. Met with the divisional secretary. Yet they were told that they did not have police reports and the officials did not listen to anything they had to say. The wife decided to meet with the leader of a Non governmental organization in the village as the leader was a woman. The next day itself she went to that office. The leader of that organization was preparing to go some where and had even stepped out of her office. Yet when she arrived the leader greeted her warmly, took her in to the office and gave her the opportunity to sit right next to her. She listened to her whole story without interruption. She then went over the medical records the woman had brought with her and encouraged her by saying they were all in order.

She told her that they will go together to meet the village official and see what he has to say, in order to let the woman know that she is not alone. When they both went to meet the village official, what he said was that this complaint could not be recorded due to time lapse - 3 months. She stated that she too knows the law but since this woman had been hospitalized for over 3 months, had had to undergo serious surgery (the medical records gave proof to this) and when she returned home, their house was not there; the complaint could be written with the documents given as evidence. When she made an entry in the police about this, the advice of the police was that, if the house holder list was in the election register or there were remains of the house itself, those facts could be taken as clear evidence and presented to the divisional secretariat.

The leader of the non-governmental organization came and met the Divisional Secretary with her and explained all the details. What the Divisional Secretary said was that, since 3 months was passed he State could not mediate in this matter but the Caritas Organization is now giving home to those who do not possess homes. The divisional secretary provided a letter from himself recommending them to go and meet the leader of an organization assisting tsunami affected families. They both went and met the leader of that organization.

Having gone through her medical records and other documents and considering sympathetically the unfairness' that had occurred to her, decided to build her a house costing Rs.450,000/=. She also received kitchen utensils and furniture for the house from that organization. Even today, she and her family are living happily in that house.

1. The leader of the non-governmental organization listening and meeting all relevant officials with her.
Supporting her until her house was approved.
2. The village official not giving her the time when she went first to make the complaint and started listening to her when she went with the leader of the non governmental organization.
3. Directing a letter to the Divisional Secretary about the police entry.
4. Although the state could not help her, the Divisional Secretary referred the problem to the respective organization.
5. The leader of the respective organization understanding her plight and acknowledging the request of an officer of a non governmental organization.

The good results that came out of active listening can be seen clearly when considering all these factors.

Inactive Listening (case study)

This is a situation in which when a 14 year old girl was raped and the complaint being recorded, due to their carelessness, they could not obtain the assistance of the law. It is a young girl who has attained age at the age of 14. Her parents make a living by being involved in daily labour. She has a brother of about 10 years of age. The brother and sister go to school in the morning and return home at about 2pm. This daughter is alone at home until the parents return at 5.30pm. As the brother is small he goes to neighboring houses to play and comes back home when the parents return. A neighboring male of about 27 years of age who is employed elsewhere and visits the village on weekends, begins to visit this home. He knows that the parents are not at home. The daughter complains to the mother several times that because of his visits she cannot do her school work. She also told the mother that she was not comfortable with his behavior. Yet the mother did not take notice of what she said.

One day when he had come home while the parents and brother were not in, a thunderous rain began, as if to aid him. No one heard her screaming. on this day he raped this girl and got away. When the mother arrived home that day it was too late. Though they went to the police station to make a complaint, the policeman said he had to go for an emergency and for them to return the next day to make the entry. The next day the daughter arrived at the police station, having washed her clothes and bathed, because of the lack of knowledge. When the entry was being made the next day she had no evidence with her. Also when that went to the home of the male to question him, he had run away without telling the people at his house.

1. If the mother had listened actively to the daughter when she told her about that male's behavior, this kind of incident would not have happened.
2. If they had insisted on making the entry with evidence when they first arrived at the police station, This case could have been taken forward.
3. If the entry were recorded on the same day as she made the entry and a search put out for the young man on that day itself, he could have been caught. yet, he has got away.
4. Because of all these facts and because of the this family's ignorance and poverty, they did not go back to the police station. The results of this has been that the education of the girl has been interrupted and the society is burdened up.

Summary of participants feedback from the sessions

- Issues were presented methodically while the analysis was especially insightful.
- Easy to remember the topic discussed as activities were done in relation to the subject and the situation.
- It was good to receive the opportunity to identify the advantages of the 4H concept,
- Workshop was conducted in a simple and easy to understand manner
- Examples and explaining was good.
- Opportunity was given, through group activities, to achieve greater success by building unity and competitiveness.
- Opportunity was given to think about what should and should not be done as a community leader.
- It was good getting the opportunity to bring out skills and deepen understanding through role play.
- Providing the opportunity to present as groups was good
- Putting active and inactive listening into practice provided the possibility to deepen understanding and remember the session

Participants particularly stated that they acquired knowledge in the following areas:

- About how sensitive the emotional reactions of people are, in situations of disaster.
- That it is never too late make maximum use of our skills for our own success.
- Inactive listening has been the cause of many misunderstandings within the home and between neighbors and in communities and society
- Realizing how simply and successfully the activities of an organization can be achieved through clear communication.
- Learning that listening and showing respect is essential when working with others and putting what was learnt into practice in current activities.
- In order to achieve peace, it is essential that one processes flexibility, active listening patience, making correct decisions and showing respect.

- Identifying the social problems that occur due to the inability to take correct decisions where necessary.
- While there was an opportunity to bring out our skills and talents through a short role play, it also helped us to assess our abilities in organizing, planning and implementing.
- The success which can be gained by making correct strategies and implementing them.

3. PERSPECTIVES AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CONFLICT - TWO DAY WORKSHOPS

A work shop on conflict resolution was held in the three districts of Matara, Galle and Kalutara on the dates stated below :

Matara District	-	29 th & 30 th August 2008 Ahangama	
Galle District	-	31 st August & 01 st September 2008 Hikkaduwa	
Kalutara District	-	06 th & 7 th September 2008 Kalutara	
Resource Person	-	Mr. Navas Mohamed	} Matara District
Facilitators	-	Mrs. Thilaka Weerakoon.	
		Mrs. Chandra Gamage	
Resource Person	-	Mr. Navas Mohamed	} Galle District
Facilitators	-	Mrs. Thilaka Weerakoon.	
		Mrs. Chandra Gamage	
Resource Person	-	Mrs. Monica Alfred	} Kalutara District
Facilitators	-	Mrs. Thilaka Weerakoon.	
		Mrs. Chandra Gamage	

Conflict Analysis

Objectives of workshop:

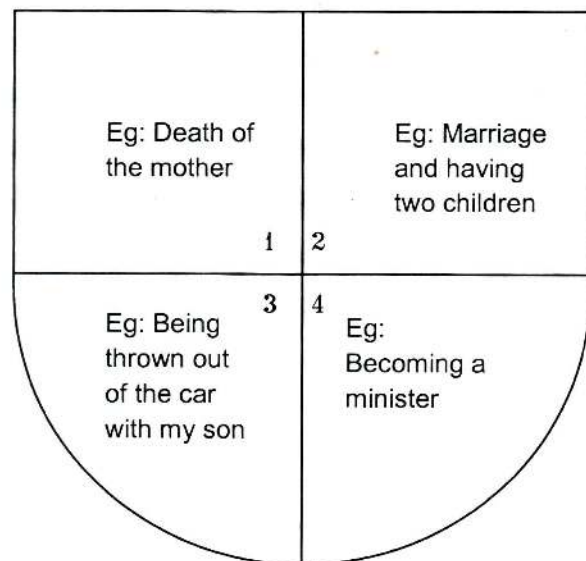
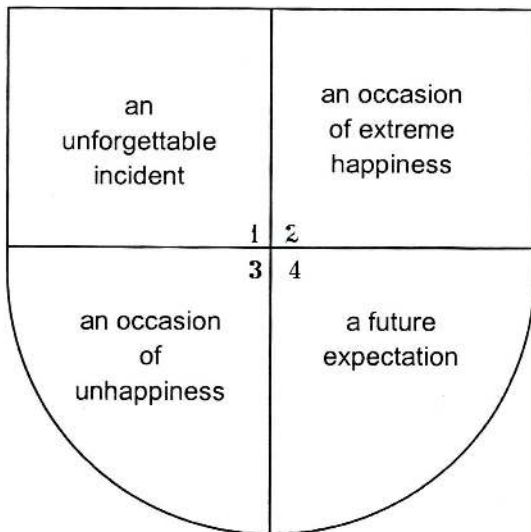
- ⇒ **Building effective methods of conflict resolution , combining the experiences and ideas of the participants with the concepts and methodology of conflict resolution.**
- ⇒ **Creating practical support for other women to gain experience through the experiences of the participants.**

Contents of workshop

- ⇒ Stages of conflict
- ⇒ Analysis of conflict
- ⇒ Understanding conflict
- ⇒ Conflict resolution
- ⇒ Future- Our role at national level

Session 1: Linking conflict to life experiences

Participants were introduced to the topic in the following manner: From the day we were born we have gone through a multitude of conflict. We have faced conflict as much as we have resolved them. There are occasions where we have resolved conflicts as a mother and a wife. Conflict occurs frequently during our life time. That is the nature of the world. You have to view life as a shield.



This is a way in which to look at one's own life

- i. remembered something - an issue which was deep in the mind
- ii. an occasion of extreme happiness - felt joy
- iii. an occasion of sadness - a life long pain
- iv. a future expectation - Finding happiness through fear, conflict and problems

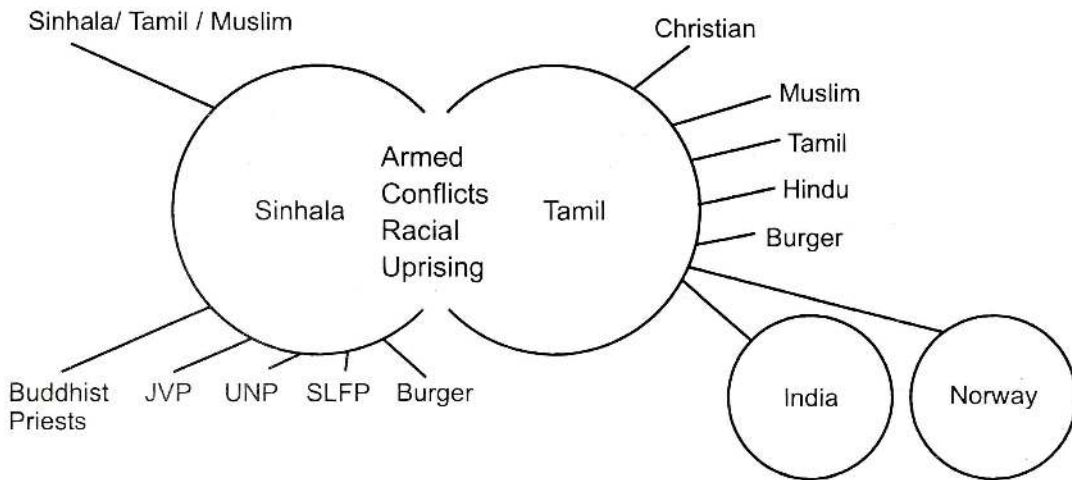
Participants were then made to classify these conflicts in the following way:

Emotional	Cultural	Environmental	Social	Political
Ego Selfish Love Doubt Deceit Antagonism Impatience Unnecessary connections Hardness Jealousy Inflexibility Not listening Avoiding Lack of respect	Race, caste Religion Conflict on political boundaries Marriage Child rights	Environment Health problems Technological Progress Roads and highways Water Natural disasters Rain Climate	Leadership Between families Housing issues Inheritance Children Parents Mother in law, daughter in law Progress Money Employment Lack of fair play Divorce Marriage Not being able to travel in peace Food The right person not being given the right position Benefits Aid Promotions Education Corruption Scarcity of resources.	Giving nominations Party factions Fight for preferential votes Going above each other Assets Being outstanding Violence Commutations Pillage of votes Winning and losing

All these facts can be divided into further two categories, namely, external and internal.

What can happen in a conflict		
Lose	- win	one party
Win	- lose	
Win	- win	both parties
Lose	- lose	

History of conflict in Sri Lanka



Session 2: Participants then analyzed the positive and negative sides of conflict

Positive side of conflict



Negative side of conflict



HANDOUT

Method of resolving conflict

- i. conflict management
- ii. conflict mitigation
- iii. conflict resolution
- iv. conflict transformation
- v. conflict prevention

Types of resolving conflict

Conflict management

Conflict resolution is solving conflict without violence. This type of management occurs mainly in private organizations.

Conflict mitigation - settlement & judgments of court of law

Conflict resolution

Resolve the conflict with the participation of all stakeholders through negotiations

Conflict transformation

Changing the direction of a conflict to bring positive results and doing so before it mature to an armed conflict.

Conflict prevention tools

- informal discussions
- negotiation
- facilitation by third party
- both parties should be in agreement (conditions)
- create a conducive atmosphere
- provide the opportunity to reach their solutions
- mediation
- the third party refers the case to court in search of a solution. (arbitration)

Qualities of facilitator in resolving conflict

- impartiality
- not expecting advantages or benefits
- not imply that one is a specialist.
- should behave as a person who will not be providing the solution
- should state that will be only assisting in finding a solution
- should possess excellent communicational skills.

Duties of a facilitator

- meet the two parties' separately
- understanding the situation
- give a date, time and a place to meet
- welcome them when they arrive at
- the appointed place.
- present a chair.
- Introduce yourself as the facilitator
- obtain the consent of both parties to resolve the conflict
- obtain the consent, from both parties to facilitate.
- decide who will present first, laying down conditions

HANDOUTS contd...

Conditions for resolving conflict

- create space for both parties to air their views.
- identify problems
- identify needs
- inquire into the method of finding a solution
- both parties be in agreement of the solution
- design a future plan
- finding a solution amicably
- speak only within the time given to one and do not interrupt others
- do not use unsuitable language
- listen
- decide who would air their views first
- list ideas of both parties and inform the decision at a discussion.
- The theoretical issues taken up for discussion and practical activities carried out by the resource persons at the Matara and Galle districts are stated below.



Session 3: Understanding conflict

This session centered around critical questions: What are the root causes for the conflict? Who are the parties to the conflict? Why and from when did it happen? What are our issues and what are other's issues? Can we understand them?

The session also included - Recognizing the positive aspects of a conflict

Solutions	- highlighting – new experiences
Justification	- building a positive mentality
Develop skills	- rectifying errors
New suggestions	- new partners
Understanding	- facing challenges

The positive and negative answers given by the participants on two occasions on conflict are given above. It is important to understand that the conflict is seen differently by one another. On many occasions we present solutions without really understanding the conflict.

The outcome of a conflict depends on how the parties are involved. The way in which we should understand that every individual get involved in a conflict differently. Participants understood that we cannot create a world without conflict, but we are able to change the way we handle a conflict. We should have a method of conflict resolution in order to have positive outcomes. If we act upon understanding conflicts arising from differences then will be able to work towards outcomes.

- Physical appearance
- According to the area that you live.
- According to religion
- According to race
- According to preference

These are natural differences. As human beings, conflict is also natural. As people we are different from one another. Therefore, what we should do is to prepare individuals who can handle conflict positively.

What if we all had one name.....?

What if every one wore the same clothes..... ?

What if we all did the same thing.....?

Difference is necessary. Difference is there for beauty. As we are unable to see the beauty of difference we have made it an issue.

⇒ A group exercise was given for this difference to be understood clearly.

- Share a personal conflict experience with your group.
- Who created the conflict?
- How was the conflict resolved?

Opportunity was provided for discussion and presentation.

- 1) Did you discuss a problem which had ended with relationships being broken?
- 2) Has a third party been involved in every conflict?
- 3) Was it possible to handle this conflict in a different way?
- 4) Did such handling bring positive results?

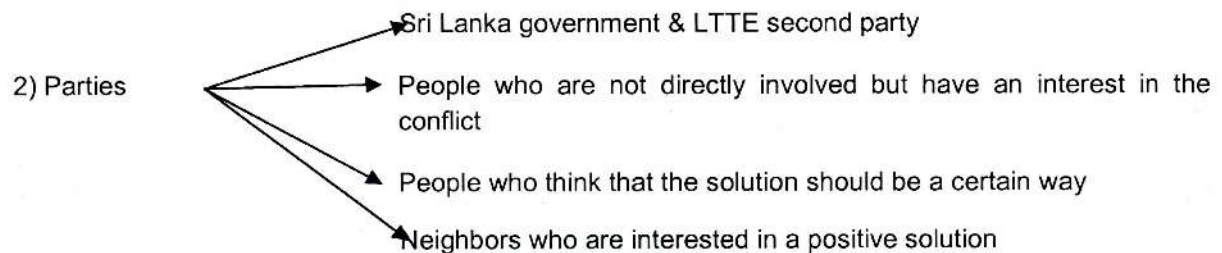
The following discussion was held as parties who could gain positive results.

Tips in analyzing conflict

- ⇒ We should analyze from the angle of those who are involved in the conflict
- ⇒ The analysis would be difficult if the parties most strongly involved in the conflict are not identified.
- ⇒ Is it possible to arrive at conclusions on every occasion?
- ⇒ What are important methodologies included in the suggestions?
- ⇒ Solutions should be found by discussing with the parties.
- ⇒ It is easy to find solutions if you have an accurate understanding of the conflict

Conceptual side of conflict

1) What is the conflict?



3) It is easier to resolve the conflict if we think about the conflict deeply. By doing so our attention can be drawn towards the needs of individuals.

- 4) Who is involved in the conflict from the past? What is the beginning? What are the reasons for being successful / unsuccessful? Root causes can be prevented by looking for them
- 5) Understand that conflicts are created by different values and attitudes. Wrong attitudes can be done away with trust.

The expectations from this exercise were to learn how to handle a conflict as a people's representative in order to resolve it as well how to resolve it positively.

- there should be positive attitudes towards conflict
- the fact that conflict is not negative (it is not possible to solve conflict with feelings and attitudes)
- researching whether, the relationships between the parties are good?
- How many parties are involved
- What are the contradictory ideas
- verbal and non verbal expression. (it is necessary to understand non verbal expression)
- how are parties communicating?

The ideas of the participants at the end of the group exercise



- it is possible to come to different solutions if resources are available
- this is something that women should plan collectively.
- the issue needs to be repeatedly analyzed
- it is not sufficient to give only temporary solutions
- steps to be taken so that the conflict will not resurge
- a true commitment and desire is needed to solve the conflicts in the country at this moment.

What is important is to resolve the conflict without violence. It is not suitable to use violence to prevent or resolve a conflict.

Occasions when women can participate as social activists

- during conflict resolution, conflict prevention and conflict transformation when:

- A. The two parties are resolving a conflict through informal talks
- B. Bargaining - Talks on request by the two parties only
- C. Facilitating – participation of a third party. Not influencing the solution but assisting both parties.
- D. Mediation – In mediation influence can be used
- E. Judgment of a court of law – would influence the solution strongly
The ideas of the parties are not needed.

We can participate in four of these occasions. A group exercise was conducted to experience this situation practically.

Group exercise

How can we look at "Peace", as the biggest issue in the country ?

Objectives are to:

- make an effort to see the issues that are not visible
- come out from the mentality of doing only what one thinks is beneficial
- figure out work adapting to a complex problem

A review of how the participants would work in relation to this was done and the following ideas emerged:

- We who were used to looking at only the surface of a problem, made an effort to see through it
- There is a significant amount of work that a women can do for peace
- It is necessary to identify and understand each other's needs for this one should listen with patience.
- Should respect the differences in each person.
- Solutions for conflicts should be found the moment they emerge.
- If the parties who are in agreement are to find a successful solution they have to come up with a plan to prevent the conflict resurging

Individual district group exercises and discussion points that emerged:

Participants were given case studies to analyze various issues pertaining to resolving a conflict

Matara

Group Exercise

Conflict analysis

Conflict : The university receiving a financial aid from the government of Norway. Requests were made by one Student Union for the funds to be used to provide a hostel and by another Student Union for a lecture hall.

Parties : Students of the arts faculty and the management faculty.

Need : arts faculty : though they had a requirement for a lecture hall, their main request was for a hostel.

Management faculty : Though they had a requirement for a hostel, their main request was for a lecture hall.

History : The request for a hostel being repeated over a number of years the vice chancellor having promised to provide this facility. Also a foundation stone had been laid to build a lecture hall and then abandoned for many years.

Participants identified the following alternatives

- It is absolutely necessary to provide hostel facilities for students who come from afar. One hostel building being in a dilapidated situation, it is essential that a hostel be provided.
- At the same time as both the arts and management faculty lectures are held in the same hall. There have been times where due to time constraints some lectures not being held. Even though both issues are common to all the students, they have divided into two groups on the basis of the priority and created a conflict.
- Hostel facilities should be provided which are common to both parties. The student aid they receive is not adequate to provide for external hostel facilities.
- Therefore provide hostel facilities and reschedule the lecture time table with teachers. Use the time frame of 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. to conduct lectures which do not fit in to the other days.
- Providing the hall to the arts faculty for 3 days and management faculty for 2 days would solve both the problems.

Galle

Group exercise

Understanding conflict: a dispute between two neighboring families regarding fencing a land.

A youth from a near by house made an effort to bring to a settlement, to a dispute over fencing of a land, between two neighboring families which has been going on over a long period of time. One party who was at the fore front of the conflict was an civil security official. While the argument was going on the officer took his gun and fired some shots. A youth from the opposing party and the youth who came to mediate were both killed. The party who was at the fore front of the conflict ran away from the village.

A positive resolution of this conflict would have been:

As these two families were related, they could have requested advice from an elderly family member and got a government surveyor to survey the land and fence it. Also if the weapon was not used , conflict ending in death could have been avoided

Conflict analysis

- the main reason for the negative result of this conflict is that using a weapon and instant anger
- both parties not understanding each other clearly
- not having an attitude of solidarity as neighbours.
- the lack of knowledge about one's own rights.

Case Study

One mother has a son and daughter. There is an orange tree in front of their house. After a long time the tree bore a single orange. When this orange is ripe the son says that he want the orange. Yet the daughter also wanted it. The way in which the mother solved this conflict is shown below.

She brought her son and asked him to explain his need for the orange. The son said that he needed the seeds of the fruit to plant in the plot his agriculture master had prepared with him and the other students in school. When the mother asked the daughter why she needed the orange, the daughter said she had been entrusted by her home science teacher to bring orange peel to put in the cake they were planning to bake. This is a very simple example of how the mother solved the conflict by listening to and understanding the needs of both the son and daughter, giving the seeds to the son, the peel to the daughter and making use of the juice to make a drink for all.

The ideas of the participants at the end of the two day workshop on conflict resolution

- realizing that failure to understand problems results in breach of peace in the family.
- how much more effective would listening to what is told and finding reasons for it, be in maintaining peace within a family than showing resentment?
- understanding the disastrous effects of making decisions alone without the involvement of all parties.
- how pleasant would our home, area and country be if we had the ability to understand each others needs and differences.
- developed skills needed to be a mediator as a woman to a great extent
- realizing that finding a solution involving the needs of both parties is far more effective than finding a settlement through a court order.
- It is possible to stand successfully as a women in conflict resolution within the home and community
- being very happy about having had the opportunity to participate in a very successful two day workshop.

4. EXPLORING POWER TO CHANGE – TWO DAY WORKSHOPS

The third workshop was held in the Matara, Kalutara and Galle districts on the dates stated below.

Matara District	-	06, 07 October 2008 Ahangama
Galle District	-	08, 09 October 2008 Hikkaduwa
Kalutara District	-	10, 11 October 2008 Kalutara
Resource Person	-	Chandra Gamage and Thilaka Weerakoon

Session 1: The Tsunami Disaster

The workshop was introduced starting with women's experiences of Tsunami. The facilitators thought that the best way to explore the agency of change and peace building was to link it to the Tsunami experience.

The session started with discussion about the short term, mid term and long term assistance given for those who were affected by the tsunami disaster.

Critical question posed to the participants: Why are we late in coming together to work for peace, when we came together with so much humanity in a time of huge natural disaster?

The participants were made aware of the theory and practicality of basic human needs :

1. Biological

- food
- nutrition
- health
- sexual needs
- sleep

2. Psychological

- mental stress about what was lost
- relationships
- leisure
- entertainment
- expectation
- creating protective permanent relationships
- obtaining active community participation

3. Social

- family
- home
- livelihood
- education
- protection
- relationships between neighbours, friends and relations
- Personnel needs

Points to note: Men and women experience crisis situations such as natural disasters and conflict differently. During post disaster/ post conflict situations special needs of women such as nutritional needs of pregnant mothers and children e.t.c need to be taken into consideration. Also facilities for elders and persons with disability and needs of displaced women need to be made priority.

The group exercise was conducted asking the participants to think in retrospect to the tsunami situation.

Exercise for participants:

- Assess the needs of the community
- Assess the short term, mid term and long term assistance provided to those affected by the tsunami disaster
- Assess who did that? why did they do what they did?
- Evaluate the short term, mid term and long term services provided by the people in order to understand the different needs of the community.

Participants came up with the following assessment:

Short term (within 3-4 days) assistance provided to those affected by tsunami

- collecting the dead
- taking the wounded to hospital.
- providing artificial respiration to those who had swallowed water
- doctors helping patients
- efficiency of the hospital staff
- providing protection and rescuing the survivors stuck under buildings and vehicle with the help of army and police officers.
- taking those who were not hurt but lost their home to temples and churches
- providing hot food and drink
- providing clothes and sleeping material
- helped those who were lost to find their family members
- providing protection to those in temples and churches
- cleaning homes and water ways
- helping to find corpses and burying
- funeral parlors making coffins free of charge
- mothers providing milk to breast fed babies
- providing temporary shelters
- providing clean drinking water
- providing transport facilities and exchanging fuel
- priests and Buddhist monks going by free will to perform death duties at funerals
- providing a mental relief
- assisting in obtaining death certificates
- Providing lanterns, torches, candles and medicines free of charge.

Mid term assistance provided to those affected by tsunami

- handing over children who had lost their parents to suitable places
- constructing temporary shelters
- providing dry rations
- providing household appliances
- providing rations
- providing a payment of Rs 5000/= monthly
- providing police records
- assistance from government, non-governmental and foreign organizations
- providing information to the government
- establishing community organizations
- providing information to international organizations which give aid
- providing boats and nets to the fishing industry

- providing coir and machines for the manufacture of coir ropes
- giving aid to rebuild their self employment schemes
- distributing state and international aid appropriately
- doctors conducting camps
- providing work for a daily wage
- conducting programmes to give psychological relief
- constructing a community center near the camps and providing the daily news papers
- providing equipment to persons with disability
- obtaining compensation for the dead
- making arrangements for educational activities to carried out in temporary schools

Long term assistance provided to those affected by tsunami

- providing permanent shelters
- extending food ration period
- providing home utensils
- providing training for new job skills
- providing coir rope manufacturing machines
- providing boats, nets and tools
- providing money to build houses
- getting the help of international organizations
- obtaining the correct information through establishing of village organizations
- implementing loan schemes
- providing awareness of human rights and child rights
- providing permanent sanitary facilities
- constructing water supply facilities and providing water tanks
- providing identity cards and other necessary documents
- providing permanent schools
- provide health facilities
- awareness on disaster management
- coast conservation
- providing shelters in villages to those who were residing by the beach

Who helped the community affected by the tsunami

- community at village level
 - monks in temples
 - priests in churches
 - Principals and teachers by providing schools
 - relatives
 - neighbours
 - doctors and hospital staff
 - vehicle owners
 - different races, communities of different religions, state and private sector institutions
 - community groups
 - non-governmental organizations and foreign organizations
 - the police and the armed forces
- } within 3 – 4 days

Why did they do this for the community affected by tsunami?

- humanity
- duty
- as relations
- as neighbours
- as friends
- responsibility
- hospitality

- out of kindness
- religious reasons
- realizing the need
- feeling of solidarity
- to provide courage
- to share sadness
- to show them that they are not alone
- for unity
- not thinking of racial differences
- to maintain the status quo
- for decrease not to spread
- to minimize the disaster
- to develop cordiality
- considering merit
- as these incidents touched the heart deeply
- thinking that such things could happen to us too
- knowing the importance of humanity
- because we are Sri Lankans
- understanding the needs of people
- responsibility of the state

Session 2: Participants were made to assess critical situations faced as a girl/woman, and as a community in situations of tsunami, in war and other disasters

The following was the participants analysis:

- Being subject sexual and other abuses
- Lack of security and protection due to the loss of parents
- Forced to go into menial service
- Being isolated through division of race, religion and cast.
- Unsuitable marriages taking place due to loss of parents
- Having to bear the burden of the family at a young age
- Miscarriages and still births due to underage marriages
- Marriages breaking down in a few months due to going into marriage without parents consent or advice
- Los of education
- Not having the mental strength to sit for competitive exams
- Female children becoming destitute when they come of age due to the loss of parents
- Future of children being uncertain
- Having to bear a responsibility greater than their age
- Contracting social diseases due to being subjected to different abuses
- Lack of availability for personal sanitation within camps
- Having to present oneself to different aid providers
- Facing problems when trying to obtain homes due to lack of adults
- Having to accede to the father's needs due to the mother being dead
- Having to face problems when trying to get job because of living in camps and not having educational certificates
- Engagements of those engaged to marry breaking down
- Not accepted by society

Problems faced as a community in times of war, tsunami and other disasters

- Sense of fear and insecurity
- Destruction of property
- Destruction of families
- Destruction of transport facilities
- Break down of communications

- Environmental pollution
- Loss of homes
- Loss of security
- Loss of pride
- Loss of neighbours and relatives
- Problems in health
- Loss of clean water
- Loss of individuality
- Forced to be in different camps with different types of people
- Scarcity of food
- Becoming dependant
- Not being able to go to work
- Forced to live under the rule of the camp officials or the police
- Destruction of home employment
- Having restricted space within camps
- Loss of important letters and documents
- Children needs not being met (sports, taking trips, food)
- Decline of values

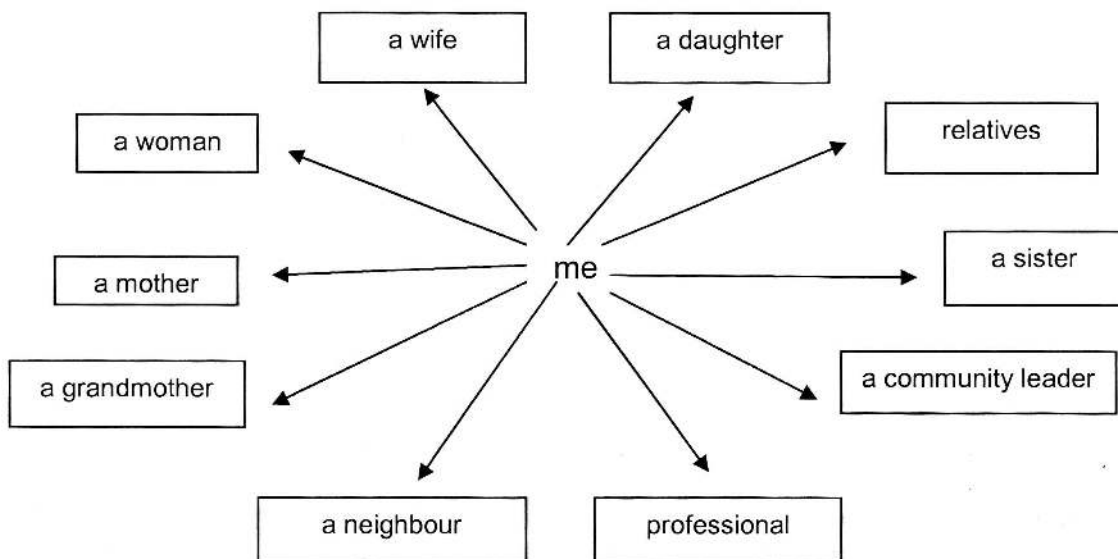
Session 3: Identifying the challenges faced as a woman in working towards creating national unity

Critical questions: The following critical questions were presented to the participants

Are you going to be confined to your homes doing household chores or are you ready to contribute to the wellbeing of the society as a women? How do you become a good neighbour?
 As a woman where am I in society? Where am I as a woman who has responsibility and a leader?
 Can I balance these roles?

Exercise

Who am I? What is my identity?



The above exercise was given to the participants to recognize the multiple identities that they posses. And secondly they were told to identify one's responsibilities within the above stated roles. Finally , they were asked to identify the challenges they have to face in performing these responsibilities.

Points to note: We strive to escape from occasions of responsibility due to not understanding this correctly. Escape means an exclusion of equilibrium. We get into problems and difficulties by not maintaining the balance. The participants were made aware that balance should be maintained by us who are the community leaders. Inability to maintain balance would result in creating problems for oneself. It is very important to explore my situation within the family and the society. One can be successful only through that.

After the above explanations, the opportunity was provided separately for the first, second and third stages. The participants were then engaged in a group exercise.

Example:

An example presented by one of the participants in identifying the roles and challenges that women face in fulfilling those roles, is as below:

K.G. Lalitha Malani

'Understanding my identity'

- a woman
- a house wife
- a wife
- a mother
- a facilitator
- a neighbour
- a sister
- a friend
- a relative
- a community leader
- a social worker
- a person who assists others
- president of a committee

As a woman :-

While I have the responsibility of being useful woman to society, I do not face any challenge regarding that.

As a housewife:-

While I have large work load as a house wife I will be able to accomplish all if I can manage my time.

As a wife :-

My responsibility as a wife is being obedient to the husband. Showing love and kindness. Assisting in his duties. I have no challenges in that aspect

As a mother :-

I have a huge responsibility as a mother. Providing clothing education and brining them up to be socially and culturally accepted. Brining them up to be good citizens. The challenge is to be with them in order to keep them away from unsuitable attractions which exist in society

As a neighbour ;:-

I try to help my neighbours as much as I can, for example, I help neighbours in preparing documents.

As a sister :-

While I try to be of help to my other siblings, the fact that I live far from them is a challenge.

As a friend and relative ;:-

Helping my friends and relatives and assist in their well being is my responsibility as a friend and relative. I have no challenge in this.

As a community leader :-

While I am interested in engaging in social service some times the social environment is a challenge, also the lack of knowledge is a challenge.

Session 4: A discussion was carried on “does the war has an impact on broken relationships and on increase of challenges?”

Participants were made to express ideas on what they thought were impacts of war:

- freedom is curtailed
- children are lost
- fear
- more check points , waste of time
- loss of parents
- children becomes orphaned
- doubt
- disgusted
- mistrust
- incorrect attitudes
- loss of values
- increase of cost of living
- unemployment
- blow to the Agri industry
- increase of spending on weapons
- corruption
- child abuse
- child soldiers
- the time which could have been utilized for development is wasted
- tourism industry is affected
- brain drain
- loss of self respect
- increase of displacement camps

Knowledge gained from this workshop to face the above challenges

- learning to listen actively to others as a social worker.
- using the acquired knowledge for social service
- understanding our duty as women
- being able to define the indicators of leadership qualities.
- obtaining an understanding of the services we currently provide

Participants were made to think about “What I can do for the community as a woman in context of disaster or conflict?”

They came up with the following points :

- bring every one together
- prepare a plan
- building a team
- uniting as groups to build harmony between races
- making others understand the realities
- build unity irrespective of religious and cast differences.
- building unity among communities
- improve the educational standard
- providing assistance in times of disaster
- in the aftermath of tsunami as women all came together irrespective of race, religious differences to help one another. This was an opportunity for peace. we could achieve it that time.

- we can do the same at the time of conflict
- help as much as possible within one's capacity through the community
- provide maximum help as a woman to those who are distressed.
- build friendships among one another with understanding

The ideas of participants at the end of workshop

- Opportunity to be aware of areas that were not addressed as a community leader
- Opportunity to think again about instances when the equilibrium was broken and withdrew when engaged in social work.
- Providing the space for me to realize that my identity should be established by myself.
- Providing the space to think about how fearful the even when one realize the effect of war indirectly and to understand how it must be for those who face it directly.
- Realizing what a small service we provide for society and individuals.
- Realizing that we have purposefully avoided opportunities for peace building.
- Realizing that the improved knowledge and skills gained from the workshops and change of attitudes would enable the organization to be of great service to the country.

Session 5: Activities related to war and tsunami

Objective of the session:

Provide the space to understand that disasters are common to all and to come to an understanding of the importance of fulfilling the necessities.

The participants were given the opportunity to identify the challenges which had to be faced in situations of disaster such as war / tsunami as women in the districts of Matara, Galle and Kalutara. This was conducted as a team exercise.

Participants were divided into three groups and made to consider the following points:

- Problems faced as a woman
- Problems faced as a girl
- Problems faced as a community

The groups were given 30 minutes to identify the above. The ideas brought forward by each group are stated below.

Group 1: Problems faced as women in times of war and all other disasters in the districts of Kalutara, Galle and Matara.

- Women becoming widows
- Loss of house and property
- Unnecessary pregnancies and illegal abortions taking place in camps
- Aid not distributed properly
- Women get into dependent mentalities
- It hurts the self esteem as a woman when forced to seek aid.
- Women having to bear the entire burden of a family by being the head of the family.
- Pregnant and elderly women not having the necessary nutrition and health facilities
- Temporarily having to use common toilets
- Unable to secure the aid due to women's lack of knowledge and fear
- Loss of self employment
- Men being restricted to camps and not able to go fishing result in financial problems within the family and the wives being ill-treated.
- Sexual relations are restricted due to men, women and children being in one room. This leads to men ill-treating women, which in turn has led to children being left in unprotected situations with relatives, and mothers are emotionally weakened.
- Women who could not face financial burdens, going abroad to work.
- Financial problems becoming worse due to women who were abroad returning home to the loss of child or husband.

- Severe mental agony for loss of close family members.
- Conflict about property arising after the death of a husband
- Unavailability of health facilities
- Society not accepting those who live in camps
- Being addicted to drugs and alcohol / increased number of thieves
- Making prostitution a way of living (because of the loss of husbands)
- Being subject to different types of abuse. (regardless of age limits)
- Increase in quarrels and conflict
- Not receiving aid due to influence of village officials
- Those in camps being underestimated when trying to obtain state or private sector jobs
- Women having to depend on others often
- Increase of persons with disability due to the war
- Having to wait in expectation of the return of husbands who have disappeared

Group 2: Problems faced as a girl, in situations of tsunami, war and other disasters

- Being subject to sexual and other abuses
- Lack of security and protection due to the loss of parents
- Forced to go into menial service
- having to bear the burden of the family at a young age
- Marriages breaking down in a few months due to going into marriage without parental consent or advice
- disruption of education
- Problems arising for women to find partners for marriage due to high number of youths being killed.
- girls becoming destitute when they come of age due to the loss of parents
- Future of children being uncertain
- Having to bear a responsibility greater than their age
- Contracting social diseases due to being subjected to different abuses
- Lack of availability for personal sanitation within camps
- Facing problems when trying to obtain homes due to lack of adults
- Having to accede to the father's needs due to the mother being dead
- Having to face problems when trying to get jobs because of living in camps and not having educational certificates
- Not accepted by society

Group 3: Problems faced as a community in times of war, tsunami and other disasters

- Fear
- Destruction of homes, property. loss of self employment
- Destruction of families. Loss of neighbors and relatives
- Destruction of transport facilities
- Break down of communications
- Environmental pollution
- Lack of security
- Loss of self esteem
- Problems in health. Lack of clean water
- Lack of privacy
- Forced to be in different camps with different types of people
- Scarcity of food
- Becoming dependant. unable to continue the job
- Forced to live under the rule of the camp officials or the police
- Having restricted space within camps
- Loss of important letters and documents
- Children needs not being met (sports, taking trips, food)
- Deterioration of values

6. WORKSHOP ON COALITION BUILDING AND NETWORKING: ONE DAY SESSION

Date – 2008. 10. 25, Hikkaduwa

5 members from each organization from Galle, Matara and Kalutara came together for the first time to share experiences, build rapport and plan for future activities.

Resource person – Visaka Dharmadasa

After a brief discussion, participants were divided into groups and made to assess the following critical questions:

As women we are able to look at it in an alternative manner. If so what can we do?

What can you as a community leader do to improve the situation of the war and a better social life of the public?

What can be done as a woman for building peace and national unity?



Team one

- bring the community together
- working in unity within the different races amongst us at a village level
- getting to know one's own culture and religion and making others aware of the same.
- whatever situation one was during tsunami or any other disaster all came together
- improving the educational standard
- understanding each other
- being cordial
- using the money spent on the war for the development of the country
- building the economy
- being proficient in all languages
- obtaining information
- analyzing information
- assist in planning
- reinforce the trust
- identifying strategies
- influencing decision making

Team two

- increasing women representation at decision making levels.
- building a team
- preparing a plan
- listen to everyone
- coming together as a team to build unity between races
- explaining facts
- build peace leaving aside the differences of races and casts
- build relationships between communities

- improve educational standard.
- provide all necessities in times of disaster.
- working with the same mentality even in the war
- help the community as much as possible
- help them to come up from the situation that they are in
- As a woman find out about those who are who are affected
- Make them aware and help them to protect their rights

Team three

- sharing the grief
- helping one another in times of sorrow
- being sensitive to different needs of different communities
- being pleasant to one another
- respecting all religions
- even knowing slightly all the languages which are used will be very helpful when working in the community
- helping to create co existence
- working with a sense of ownership
- informing relevant authorities, while treating all races equally at times of disaster, provide them protection, food and shelter.
- do not divide people into political parties based on their race.
- provide counseling services for the community to be able to live with respect for one another's religion and culture

Ideas of the participants at the end of the day regarding networking workshop

- opportunity to learn something new each day.
- understand that limiting one's duties as a woman only to the home is an injustice to society
- building one's confidence as a woman
- opportunity to develop skills
- keep building your information base
- opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with those of various organizations
- lectures were timely.
- we became interested in areas and subjects that we were not familiar before
- it was a pleasant and very useful day

7. EXCHANGE VISITS TO PUTTALAM , TRINCOMALEE AND AMPARA DISTRICTS

After the above mentioned workshops and discussion sessions were completed for 55 participants (of six organizations) from the districts of Kalutara, Galle and Matara districts an opportunity was provided to gain theoretical knowledge and share first hand experiences from women who live in communities affected by conflict in Puttalam, Trincomalee and Ampara districts.

The participants from all three districts in the South were taken in groups of ten, on 6 occasions to these areas.

Objectives

This exercise was carried out to explore the grassroot level women's agency for peace building by way of exposing grassroot level women from three southern districts to the challenges that women of war torn areas have faced for the last three decades and also women of an area who were the host community for internally displaced people (in Puttalam) and the complexities such situations brings up and to understand how women coped and found solutions.

Visit 1

Puttalam District



On 01 November 2008, 12 women from the three districts of Galle, Matara and Kalutara and 4 women from the AWAW, visited the Community Encouragement Foundation in Puttalam, to meet and exchange information with courageous women who have faced many problems, but who have been successful in overcoming them. We were welcomed warmly by Indrani Kusumaltha the President of the Prajadiriya foundation. This Foundation is a strong women's organization which consists of more than two thousand women from Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities.

Puttalam has unique complex issues which are not common in any other parts of the country. While Puttalam was a underdeveloped poor area, in 1990 more than ninety thousand IDP's came to settle. This created a situation of acute lack of shelter and employment. Social problems, decrease of moral values and especially for women, sexual abuse, deacease related to that and trafficking became a common phenomenon in this area. A very dangerous trend of proliferation and usage of illegal weapons is also prevalent in this area. Given the above facts the women of Community Encouragement Foundation are engaged in never ending tasks of facing the challenges and finding solutions to the above problems.

Visaka Dharmadasa while thanking the host organization explained to them in detail the project and what was achieved during the past eight months and that the women of south are here to share and learn from the rich experience of women of Puttalam.

Session 1: The resource person divided the participants into three groups to exchange experiences of armed conflict faced by women of Puttalam and tsunami affected women of south.

Exercise – Identifying the issues faced by women in the south and north western provinces due to war and tsunami.

Presentation by the group



Issues faced by women due to war

- people displaced by war being placed in camps in the Puttalam district. (from Jafna, Vavuniya and Mannar)
- land issues
- decrease in job opportunities
- inadequate supply of drinking water, shelter, and electricity
- economic problems arising due to IDP's (internally displaced people) working for lesser wage
- lack of facilities for education
- more and more men leave their wives
- sexual abuse
- abuse of children
- health issues
- spread of HIV/Aids
- prostitution at village level
- increase in widows
- increase in orphaned children
- lack of protection
- increase of camps
- increase in abuse of women
- increase in unwanted pregnancies

The participants from the three districts were given an opportunity by the Resource Person to present a role play depicting tsunami.

Visit 2

Trincomolee

On 07.11.2008, 12 women from the three districts of Galle, Matara and Kalutara and 4 women from the AWAW reached Trincomolee in order to meet women of Sinhala Tamil Rural Women Organization the following day to share and learn from their experiences. Since they reached Trincomolee at a reasonable time they took the opportunity to visit Velgama Buddhist Vihara which is significant in many ways. It is the only Buddhist temple which has inscription in Tamil. This bears evidence that in the past there have been Tamil Buddhists living in that part of the country. We believe that these facts will be of immense value when Sri Lanka finds peace in future.

On 08.11.2008, 12 women from the three districts of Galle, Matara and Kalutara and 4 from the AWAW met with the members of the Kanthale Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim Rural Women's Organization. The Rural Women's Organization of Kanthale is a branch of the Nuwara Eliya Sinhala, Tamil Rural Women's Organization. Kanthale is an area where Sinhala, Muslim and Tamil people are living. The people of this area are predominantly farmers and can relate back to decades where disputes on water usage became an acute problem. It has significantly contributed to the prevailing armed conflict in the country. In spite of being the delta of the longest river in the country, the inability of the decision makers to make use of the available water resources for the benefit of the people are some of the root causes of the conflict. Three decade long war has taken its toll by way of human and other resources being destroyed; disruption of livelihood and education is common. Women of Kanthale having had to live under these harsh conditions have found ways and means of consoling each other and working towards peace.

Visaka Dharmadasa the chair of AWAW, the 10 women from the three districts and the two resource persons, Thilaka Weerakoon and U.M.G. Chandra participated in this programme which began at about 9am.

Visaka Dharmadasa explained the objectives of the programme. The reasons for this programme to be held in Kanthale was because people who are suffering from the effects of war live here and it was necessary to show the women from south how Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities have organized themselves together. At the end of her talk, Violet an official of the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim women's organization presented their experiences of the war and said that they are very happy to be able to meet with the women from the south and share their experiences.



Following on from this, the resource person Thilaka gave them the opportunity to get to know each other and establish long term friendships. They discussed each other's details and presented their friends details. After conducting an ice breaker exercise with the participants, Chandra the Resource Person divided them into three groups and informed them to exchange experiences and ideas of tsunami and war and to prepare presentations of them. Once their ideas were presented they were taken into discussion. While obtaining a deep understanding of the destructions of war and tsunami, they prayed for such disaster's not to reoccur.

Session 1: The resource person divided the participants into three groups to exchange experiences of armed conflict faced by women of Trincomalee and tsunami affected women of south

Presentation by group:

Issues women had to face due to war and tsunami

- increase of murders
- increase of widows

- loss of children
- loss of parents
- loss of shelter
- increase in camps for displaced persons
- increase of orphanages and elders homes
- threat to one's life for safe guarding rights
- economy being disrupted and food scarcity
- destruction of property
- disruption of education
- unemployment
- limited freedom for women within camps
- health problems
- increase in persons with disability
- recruiting of child soldiers
- increase of abduction and disappearance
- misunderstandings and animosity between races
- women being abused
- lack of protection
- constant fear and doubt
- relationships between communities are shattered

Visit 3

Ampara District

Visit to: Seva Lanka Foundation Ampara 15.11.2008

The first group of women representing the districts of Matara, Kalutara and Galle meet the women of Ampara district at the Seva Lanka Institute on the 15th of November 2008. Ampara district is unique not only because Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities live there, it also covers a large area of land and is regarded as the granary of the Island. It is also very special as people of all three communities' main livelihood as is agriculture along with fishing. Ampara also was one of the most tsunami affected districts. A district which was already heavily affected by war was severely damaged by the tsunami. As a result of all three communities living in this district and the direct impact of war the trust level between the communities has eroded. Therefore, women not only have to find ways and means existing but they have to shoulder the biggest burden of building much needed trust between the communities.

While Miss Seetha Kumari representing the women of Ampara district welcomed us, Visaka Dharmadasa explained the project and reasons for this visit. She explained the goals of this project which was sponsored by Women Defining Peace. She wanted women from south and east to learn from each others experiences, especially the experience of the women of eastern province.

The women were told that it is not enough to be sensitive to the difficulties of others but they should go home with the determination of making that change for the betterment of the society.

Session 1: The women were divided into three groups and were asked to share their experience of war and tsunami.

Through this kind of exposures, women get the opportunity to share and learn from one another. The women of Ampara mentioned specially that it was a very good experience for them and that they will be very happy to come to the south on similar exchange visits.

Presentation by group

Experiences and issues of women in the north due to tsunami and conflict

- increase of widows
- being restricted to camps due to loss of shelter
- increase of orphaned children

- Torture
- personal vengeance
- lack of protection due to loss of parents
- attempted suicide by persons isolated due to loss of family and property
- economic difficulties
- having to build new shelters
- having to begin new livelihoods
- discrimination against widows
- increase of persons with disability
- family ties are eroded due to war
- women and children not having the necessary protection
- having flee leaving property and possessions
- religious and race differences
- destruction of children's educational activities
- living in fear

Experiences and issues of women in the south due to tsunami

- assisting each other irrespective of race, religion and cast
- establishment of camps
- destruction to lives and property
- deterioration of physical and mental health
- abuse of women
- attempting to take orphaned children as domestic helps
- aid not being distributed fairly
- claiming of aid by those who were not affected
- orphaned children being abused
- family problems increasing due to being in camps
- unnecessary pregnancies
- women being subject to sexual abuse
- child abuse
- Economic difficulty due to destruction of the fishing activities and self employment schemes



Visit Number 4

Puttalam District

Meeting the members of the Community Diriya Foundation Puttalam 26.11.2008

The meeting of women who had arrived from Matara, Galle and Kalutara and the Sinhala, Muslim and Tamil women of Puttalam district. All present were welcomed warmly by Indrani Kusumalatha the President of the Prajadiriya Foundation.

The opening was made more attractive by all the women lighting oil lamps representing the different races. Visaka Dharmadasa explained in detail the project and what was achieved during the past

eight months and that the women of south are here to share and learn from the rich experience of women of Puttalam

There after the women were asked to select a friend and introduce herself to that friend. Since there were Tamil only speakers and the women from south spoke only Sinhalese they had to go to the women who were bilingual in some cases. Special attention was drawn to some women who had no opportunity to learn to read and write. It was told that it is extremely important to have adult education classes and leadership workshops for some of the members of Prjadiya Foundation.



Indrani Kusumalatha the President of the organization in her address mentioned that Puttalam town has 142 NGO's thus making the population dependents. She further mentioned that due to the sheer poverty women of north western province had less opportunities to go to school. Most of the women here are bread winners of their families. After the Resource Person pointed out some of the short comings in the introduction and gave them the opportunity to divide into groups and discuss about the impacts if war and tsunami as well the general social situation.

Session 1: The women were divided into three groups and were asked to share their experience of war and tsunami.

Group presentations:

Problems faced by the women of Puttalam district

- arrival of IDP's. (from Jafana, Vavuniya, Mannar)
- division of resources due to IDP's
- increase of unemployment (due to IDP's working for lower wages)
- economic difficulty due to husbands abandoning the family
- being subject to sexual and domestic violence
- health issues
- lack of basic needs. (such as water, shelter, electricity)
- having to face floods due to unauthorized prawn farming
- alcohol and drug addiction
- dependant mentality
- poor literacy rate among adult population
- increase in the number of children who do not receive education
- lack of infrastructure facilities
- lack of necessary sanitary facilities
- increased possibility for the spread of HIV / Aids due to the increase in prostitution

Experiences and issues faced by women in the south due to war and tsunami

- young widows with children due to war
- orphaned children being vulnerable to abuse and cheating
- lack of protection for children
- depression

- loss of employment and property due to tsunami
- being prey to sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies, venereal diseases and mental and physical abuse within the camps
- health issues

Conflicts faced by the women in the south due to tsunami

- loss of shelter
- lack of security due to living in camps
- limited space within the camps
- dependent mentality
- health, sanitation and nutritional problems of pregnant and elderly women

The women were very happy regarding today's programme where women of Puttalam were able to learn from women of south their tsunami experience. The women of south felt it was a very special opportunity for them to understand the difficulties faced by women of Puttalam and the ground realities that the villages faced. The idea that they had about Puttalam was different from what they realized through the interactions



Visit 5

Ampara

Seva Lanka Foundation Ampara 30.11.2008

On 30th of November 2008 women of the three southern districts visited the Seva Lanka complex in Ampara in order to spend a day of sharing and learning from the women of Ampara.

Since it was a Sunday and a Minister was also visiting the area the security was tight and the women from the Tamil villages were late to arrive. The women were given time to talk to each other to and get to know and do the introduction of the woman that they met. They have discussed the impact of war and tsunami and how they have coped.

They were divided into 4 groups and asked to discuss how each one of them experienced the war and tsunami.

We had two Tamil youths as interpreters and it was very special because apart from the interpretation they also actively participated in the discussions.

Session 1: The women were divided into four groups and were asked to share their experience of war and tsunami.

Experiences and issues of the people of the East due to war

- mental stress due to loss of family members
- having to abandon house and property
- has to undergo vigorous searching by the security forces due to being Tamils
- disruption of education
- living in fear due to abduction of children by the LTTE/TMVP
- cultivation is affected
- freedom of movement is curtailed
- loss of life and property
- having to face various problems due to displacement
- economic difficulties
- women being subject to abuse
- members of family and relatives are forced to live in distant places.
- livestock are lost
- experiencing war from a very young age
- being divided according to races
- qualified persons being unemployed
- difficulties faced when dealing with the government offices
- large number of widows
- religious places are destroyed
- unnecessarily searched
- lack of common facilities
- having to live with uncertainty
- health issues. difficulties in travel and transport
- loss of important documentation
- increase of malnourished children
- loss of livelihoods

Issues faced due to tsunami

- loss of lives
- loss of common property
- mental stress
- women being subject to abuse within camps
- difficulties in travel and transport due to destruction of rail and roadways.
- aid not distributed fairly



The women shared their personal stories of the experience that they have undergone due to war and the efforts that they have taken to build trust:

It was further explained that through this project Women Defining Peace, women were given the knowledge and the tools to resolve disputes not only in domestic sphere but also at the community, regional and national level. At this time the issue of search for peace was brought up and it was explained different people depending upon the situation, race and gender experience the same situation differently. There are instances where women have been subject to abuse at check points. Similarly due to sons and husbands enlisting in military families experience various difficulties and hardships. She further mentioned that the country will benefit if the war is stopped. It is difficult for a country to come out of war though peace talks are a solution the war is not a solution. Currently it is reported that on an average for a day twelve people die in Batticaloa. This is neither peace nor liberation. We can see how much difficulty the forces go through due to this war. The parents back at home eagerly wait for their return. This is the reality of war. It is important as women for us to work towards peace even in very difficult times. The friendships built today have to be nurtured which will be very helpful in the future.



Visit 6: Trincomalee District

Visit to: Trincomalee / Veeranagar Women's Rural Development Committee

The meeting of southern women and women of Trincomalee was held at the Municipal Council Auditorium, Trincomalee on the 04th of December 2008. The women of south were cordially welcomed by Miss Mogana Weeraiah, the Coordinator of Weeranagar Rural Women's Development Organization.

After the initial introduction the women were given 20 minutes to get to know one another.

It was a pleasant surprise for the the women from the South to know that the Sinhala women of Weeranagar were in fact second generation migrants from south and from the very same villages and they were very happy to meet each other. It was also very special to meet one Sinhala woman who is married to a Tamil and not only speaks fluently in Tamil but also dress and look likes a Tamil lady. This exchange of information and rapport building helped women break down stereotypes and perceptions they had of women from other ethnic communities.

It was explained to them that as women there are many ways in which we can contribute to peace building in this country. Exchange visits such as these give an opportunity for women to learn from one another and also experience the reality of the war. As well it gives an opportunity for the women of Trincomalee to know how southern women coped in such a major disaster as tsunami.

Session 1: The women were divided into three groups and was given the opportunity to discuss about the effects of war and tsunami.

Presentation by groups

Issues faced by women due to war

- increase of widows
- increase of orphan and elders homes
- lack of food and drink
- child soldiers
- disruption to educational activities
- unemployment
- loss of freedom and spread of infectious diseases due to being in camps
- murders
- increase in persons with disability
- being in constant fear and shock
- restriction of movement for girls
- disruption to education due to schools closing periodically and camps being established
- being displaced
- abduction and disappearance
- increase in violence against women
- destruction to common property
- restriction of movement after dusk
- mistrust
- depression

Issues faced by women due to tsunami

- becoming invalids due to depression
- unwanted pregnancies
- dependant mentality
- disparity of aid distribution
- loss of important documents
- destruction of natural resources
- environmental pollution
- loss of permanent shelter
- relocation have caused difficulties for fishermen to engage in fishing
- distancing of relationships
- lack of health facilities within camps
- living in fear that tsunami may reoccur
- children becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol within camps



After the presentations during plenary discussion one woman described that in her village there are 840 families that include 315 widows. The numbers of elderly homes and orphanages have increased and Tamil people have undergone more hardships than the Sinhalese. Due to security reasons fishing is restricted causing stress on livelihood resulting in social, economic and psychological stress. Due to abduction of children Tamil families have been deeply affected. She also mentioned that this kind of initiatives where Sinhala and Tamil women are brought together to create bonds will help in future difficult times as they can now work together and maintain relationships.

One experience she shared was that her nephew was badly hit by LTTE for being out on a day of their curfew. But one boy who knew him has helped to save his life. After seeing the nephew with all bruises she was very angry but following day morning because the shops were closed for curfew two Tamil boys were coming down the road in search of bread. And knowing that the villagers were upset due to her nephew's incident she knew that if the Sinhala men saw these boys they will try to take the revenge from them and got them to turn and go back before anyone noticed. Though at that time she was not very sure that she was doing the right thing even today she is very happy about her action.

After that one Tamil participant expressing her ideas said that she's very happy of the opportunity of meeting women from the south she had friends from all three communities she's very sorry that her children do not follow the same due to lack of trust among communities and the day to day happenings. Though she tried to explain to her children how the communities co-existed in the past the children didn't want to understand. Though initially they looked at Sinhalese with empathy now it has changed to an animosity. She will be happy if all can live together as before. One misunderstanding can breach the trust of the whole village.

It was explained to them that the women who were selected from three districts of south had undergone several days of workshops gaining the knowledge and tools to resolve conflicts. This exchange visit is for them to gain practical experience, as well as for them and the women of Trincomalee to share and learn from one another. In conclusion it was told, since we women are 52% of the population we have a huge responsibility towards our country.

Speaking on behalf of the Trincomalee women they told that this is a very important opportunity to share and learn first hand experience from women of south. Women from the southern districts told that not only they were able to make friends but was able to gain knowledge about Trincomalee which was limited only to news paper articles before. They were very grateful for this valuable opportunity.



The during the final two day workshops the women were able to identify the challenges faced by women during army conflict. Also they were made aware how to develop interracial relationship empowering the civil society and ways and means of building national unity by way of dialogue. The field trip enable them further understand the ground situation in the eastern province of Sri Lanka as well the complexities that women of Puttalam have to face.

8. EVALUATION MEETING 19th November 2008 at Hikkaduwa

Participants :

By this time the participants have undergone three two day workshops, one day of networking and three field trips to Puttalam, Kantale and Ampara.

The discussion started in a plenary where women shared their experiences. It was observed from the stories of personal change they shared, that some degree of attitudinal and behavioral change was achieved. It was interesting to note that there were women from the south (predominantly Sinhalese) who previously had never communicated or interacted with members of the other ethnic communities. Below are some of the experiences they shared.

Namali of Galle district said : "I used to look at Tamil people with revenge. The reason for that is the war that has been going on my country. By coming to this programme, I was able to understand that Tamils are not to be blamed. I was able to understand by neglecting minor things, we have come to this situation. Through this programme I was also able to understand that change began with changing my attitude. I found out that the children of Tamil people who are estate laborers in my community never get an opportunity to sit in the front rows in class rooms. I told my children that they have to move with Tamil children and make friends with them. And also get them to sit in front rows".

Another participant from the south mentioned the following: "I do sewing as a living and was reluctant to stitch clothes for Tamil teachers before, but now I have told her that I want to stitch her jackets. I also make artificial flowers and pots for decorations. I didn't get Tamil people involved before, because the gentlemen in the estate told me that the Tamil labourer too will have the same flower pots as ours and that is below our dignity. But I explained to them that they are also human beings and they also should be respected and I began selling pots to Tamil labourers. My husband is a military soldier and we looked at all Tamils as LTTE. But this programme helped me to change not only my self, but also my husband my children as well others. I had been discriminatory towards Tamil people but now I strive to behave and treat all my neighbours equally".

- Another woman said that only one side of the conflict was being portrayed through the media. And that it was up to initiatives such as this to aware the broader community of the plight of people in the conflict affected areas as well.
- One opinion from a woman from Matara was that they felt shame when they unable to communicate with Tamil and Muslim women in Puttalm and Kantale. But those women were able to speak fluently in Sinhala therefore she suggested that children from lower grades should learn Sinhala and Tamil and parents must strive to encourage children to learn the language.

Manel from Kalutara said that she understood there were some weaknesses in her organization due to negative perceptions and attitudes of her own members. She said further that we should begin our peace building work from our own homes. She said there was a necessity to take this message to the villagers and exchange ideas so that they can change their attitudes as well. By this we can make the south people more sensitive to problems of the north and east. She said "When tsunami came our people came to help us. But when the people of north are affected by the conflict no one is there to help them. They are our own people from our own country. Now it is time to make the south people understand this. We are ready to sensitize them."

Another participant said that: "This programme has helped us to think beyond our own identities as Sri Lankans. It also gave us the necessary tools to make the others aware as well. We should feel sorry that we have not done anything for peace so far. When our own sisters have gone through so much because of the war we have been very selfish to enjoy the life we do in the south without any concerns for the impact of the broader conflict on other women from north and east.

9. CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNT

The project aimed at building skills of 55 women from the South and enabling them to understanding of the nature of the conflict and its root causes, as well as the impacts of the conflict and issues of Tamil and Muslim women of the east. This was done with the idea of linking protracted conflict in the East to everyday lives of women in the South especially the Tsunami experience, in order to mobilize women from sectors which are not traditionally involved in peace building or human rights work and engage them into exploring their agency of peace building.

As a result the project enabled:

- Changes in attitudes, perceptions and behavior of women participants with regard to other ethnic communities and the conflict at large
- Facilitated the formation of collaborative group of women with the potential to develop into a peace constituency
- Forged linkages between women from South and East in enhancing understanding and action on peace building.
- Unique methodology of sequence of workshops and discussions which enriched exchange visits

Lessons learnt

- Enabling women from the South to understand the broader conflict, through linking with the Tsunami experience not only deepened understanding but helped women conceptualize similarities
- Language played a vital role in building trust, therefore it was essential to have some people on the project who could bridge the language gap
- Exchange visits were enriched due to the series of staggered workshops that took place before it, as this gave women the skills to listen, speak, share and learn

It was understood from this project that the key strengths for women peace builders is relationships and coalition building within and across sectors, communities and conflict lines. Women have inborn ability to build trust, they have potential to become effective 'agents of change' and peace builders in their families, communities, and society at large. When given the necessary training, tools and space women can be mobilized to bridge the ethnic divide AWAW wishes to continue with this very important process of creating the "cradle of peace" for any future peace effort to be held strongly.

ANNEXE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

1. Diriya Kantha Child Development Foundation (Kalutara District)

Service area

DS Division of Beruwala – Paalayangoda, Habarawela, Hirigalgodalla, Ganearamba, Parana Kade, Bandarawatte, Morogolla, Kaluwamodara

The total number of members in this committee are 325.

Services Provided

- Assisting towards child development.
- Providing loans for families which suffered distress due to the tsunami.
- Operating many different training schemes.
- Assisting in sanitation programmes. (Building houses and toilets)
- Promoting savings habit among people.
- Assisting children and youth societies.
- Acting as a mediator in domestic problems of families in the area.
- Training people to take responsibility within groups.
- Training people to work on time.

Taking all necessary steps to live helping one another.

2. National Pre-school Foundation (Kalutara District)

Service area

DS Division of Kalutara
DS division of Dodangoda
(Villages belonging to 2 DS divisions such as; Bomaluwa, Bolossagama, Dodangoda, Kosinna, Mankada)

Current number of members is 525.

Services provided

- Assisting pre-schools
- Assisting in child development
- Training to save in small groups
- providing loans for self employment
- providing support in all educational needs of children (families of the membership affected by the tsunami)
- Conducting programmes (pre school diploma)
- Conducting training programmes (for members in small groups)
- Training and working as pre school teachers
- Acting as village leaders
- Obtaining loans from aid organizations to improve the economic situation of our members

3. Galle Udugama Lak Kantha Agri Organization

Service area

For the areas of Udugama, Gallandala, Katagoda, Nakiyadeniya, Mapalagama, Batakatiya, Nagoda, Gamagoda, Dikkowita. 60% of women in these areas are involved in the agricultural sector. It covers two D.S. divisions.

- Galle Gangabada Paththuwa. D.S. division of Nagoda North
- D.S. division of Yakkalamulla

Services being provided currently

- Helping each other generally
- Providing prompt assistance and other necessary facilities, from a committee level, at times of disaster to relevant areas and persons. (specially in times of floods and tsunami)
- Organizing training programmes, building relationships and putting them into effect
- Obtain training on producing new varieties of seeds and giving them publicity

4. Galle Dakshina Lanka Navodya Woman's Foundation

Area of service

Baddegama DS division, Galle Kadawath Sathara DS division, Yakkalamulla DS division, Ukwatte, Yakkamulla, Galle, Galwadugoda, Wakwalle, Thibikanda, Vanduramba and Baddegama. There are more than 1600 women members to date.

Services being provided currently

- Training programmes
- Security activities
- Self employment loans
- Becoming Organized
- Being mediators in solving problems
- Training people to save
- Supporting educational activities
- Giving guidance towards creating peace
- Implementing common programmes for youth, women and children
- Giving support to community activities

Matara

5. Ruhunu Sisila Social Service orgnization

Service area –

Kumburugamuwa, Matara, Devinuwara, Gandara, Mirissa, Bandaramulla,

Services currently provided

- Providing financial assistance for women to conduct self employment.
- Conducting advisory services for women not only at an economic level but also at a social level.
- Conducting business enterprises.
- Assisting persons with disability
- Providing advisory services mental health development.

6. Samagi Women's Organization

Service area –

Polwathumodara, Waligama, Nambatunna, Dikkwalla, Nilwalla, Aparakka

Services currently provided

- Providing financial assistance for women to conduct self employment.
- Conducting advisory services for women not only at an economic level but also at a social level.
- Conducting business enterprises.
- Assisting persons with disability
- Providing advisory services mental health development.
- Running home gardens.

NAME LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE EXCHANGE VISITS

1. Puttalam

- Neetha wanigasuriya
- Ummu Rajima
- Rhuma Biba
- Selvanagama
- Amara kumara
- Ranjani Wawalagama
- Siththi Nasima
- Manike Abeysingha
- R.D.Sunethra Vijemali
- E.Shriyani
- H.I.Renuka

Those who participate from the south

K.G.Lalitha Malani
Chandra Iddallage
Manel Wikramarachchi
B.G.S. Mangalika
D.M. Chandrakanthi
G.K.Indrani Jyalakshmi
Daya Kanthi Kasthuriarachchi
Leela Gamage
K.K.Dhanawathi
J.T.S Padmalatha
U.M.G. Chandra

2. Kanthale

- E.G.H.Kanchana
- Jayalan Nithiyayan
- Niluka Tharangi
- Kajanthani
- T.Lakshmi
- A.S.Fareena
- A.J. Wimalawathi
- Gnanaseeli Hettiarachchi

Those who participated from the south

Dilani Harsha
E. Lassanthi
T.A.Pushpalatha
Shani Weerakoon
Manel Fernando
Thilaka Weerakoon
Namali Sandya
Chandra Gamage

3.Ampara

- B.G.Seetha Kumari
- Amara Weerasuriya
- K.H.Basira
- Anoma Geethanjali
- K.G. Malkanthi
- G.Neranjika Malani
- S.H. Premalatha
- Nilanthi Karunathilaka
- M.L. Abhiba
- K.M. Lalani
- S.M.Dayasheeli
- Samamma Malar
- S.Kodimalar

Those who participated from the south

Yasa Hewawithana
D.G. Shriyani
B.G.Wathugedara
Mallika Pathiraja
K.K.Manori
Eranga Kumudini
K.E. Nandani
H.A.Priyani
Shani Weerakoon
T.Weerakoon

4. Puttalam

- Lillie Margerate
- Anula Samanthi
- Wasanthi Priyanthika
- R.M. Kumaranisa
- Farina Behum
- Sandya Kumari
- Fathima Beebee
- Siththi Fareena
- Indrani Kusumalatha

Those who participated from the south

- Manel Fernando
- Anoma Nandani
- S.H. Chandrani
- U.G. Ranjani
- Nishadi Lakmali
- Sujeewa Samanthi
- Sumana Saranguhewa
- Chandralatha Subasinghe
- Shani Weerakoon

5. Ampara

- Lakshmi Fernando
- Rasika Damayanthi
- D.D.G. Nandani
- W.A. Thilini
- Shriyalatha Herath
- N. Saritha
- G. Ranasinghe
- K. Pradeepa
- K. Komila
- N. Ramraja
- V. Arjun
- B. G. Seetha Kumari
- Damayanthi Mala
- Padmini

Participants from south

- Daya Nandani Silva
- Vajira Karunathunga
- M.K. Padmawathi
- Daya KAnthi KAsthiriarachchi
- Roopa Pathirana
- Dilani Harsha
- Dulanjali Lakshika
- Thilaka Weerakoon
- K.L. Indu
- Chandra Gamage

6. Trincomalee district

- G. H. W. Shriyani Preethika
- Lalitha Warnakulasuriya
- Berandika Christopher
- Mary Angus
- A. Premawathi
- M.B. Naseha
- L.Y. Iresha Madushani
- G.H. Sunila Lalani
- L. Murugesan

Participants from south

- Manel Fernando
- K.K. Eranga
- T.P.G. Dulanjali
- D. Sumali Vidharshika
- E. G. Ariyawathi
- Indrani Jayalakshmi
- Chandrani Dadallage
- J.D. Kanthi

ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION SHEET AT THE END OF PROGRAMME

Matara – Galle – Kalutara Districts

Indicators	Very happy	Happy	No comment
1. Level of presentation	54	01	-
2. Learning from participants	54	01	-
3. Hand outs	55		
4. New experiences and knowledge gained from the programme	55		
5. Self confidence to become a leader	55	01	
6. Development of attitudes, contents and skills	55		
7. Support services	55	-	

Name list and some personal write-ups of those who participated from Matara, Kalutara and Galle Districts

Matara District

01. Mallika Wikramasinghe – 271/1, Gunasekara Mawatha, Kumburugamuwa (Ruhuna Sisila)

I am a 60 year old married woman and a mother of two. The elder son works in a chemistry society. The disobedience of my daughter has been a huge burden and pain in my life. I was able to come back into my home, after my husband had chased me out of it when he was drunk and senseless, only because of my son's pleading. Having been through so much pain, it was an immense relief to be able to participate in this programme. Being able to share experiences with other women for a couple hours was also a cause for comfort. I live in fear for my son because of the stressful situation of today due to the war. All parents, just as I, wait in anticipation until their children return home when they go out to work. It is not possible for me to face such pain as a mother and would like for the war to stop and the country to take a path towards peace.

02. K. Manel Wikramarachchi – 1/42, Kalidasa road, Matara (Ruhunu Sisila)

I am a married woman of 57 and have 4 sons. While my husband works for the Harischndra Institute, I have for the past six years been working as sewing instructor at the non-formal education unit and the Ruhunu Sisila organization. Three of the children are married and live separately. My husband and I live in the house we built with our youngest son. It is a relief to be able to get away from my monotonous life briefly and participate in this programme.

03. D.P.M. Dilan Harsha – Kongahawatte, Valakanda, Puhulvalla (Ruhunu Sisila)

I am a degree holder in expectation of a job. Currently I serve at the Ruhunu Sisila organization. My parents are living. My older sister is married and my younger sister is an external degree holder. I bear the responsibility of looking after my parents and giving my younger sister in marriage. I am disappointed with the social patterns of our country as so far I have not been successful of securing a government job. Yet I am happy that I can be involved in social service. also I value the opportunity of being able to increase my knowledge practically by participating in these types of programmes.

04. K.K.A. Manori Udayakanthi – No. 617/8, Matara Road, Palana, Waligama (Ruhunu Sisila)

My family consists of six including my parents. I have passed my advanced level examinations. While my older brother is employed my younger brother and sister have completed their education and are at home. The family is maintained with my father's income. At the time we lost our house due to the tsunami, I was on holiday with my sister. From the time I found out about the tsunami I have been in great shock. I lived in fear for 4 days until I met my parents in one of the camps. All my documents and educational certificates had been washed away by the sea but I managed to get those certificates back. We rebuilt our house with the aid funds we received. I currently work as a field officer for the Ruhuna Sisila organization.

05. Thalatha Vidhanagamarachchi – Julgahahena, Thalalla south, Gandara

I am an unmarried woman of 58 years. My parents are not living. Though I worked for 12 years as an audit officer, I had to give up the job during the terror period, due to the mere fact of being a woman and having to face difficulties. I hold office in committees and organizations. I have two sisters. Having lost one out of 5 brothers is a great sadness. Even though I do not have any personal reason for pain, the current situation of the country makes me afraid. Being able to get away from my monotonous life and participate in these programmes is a relief to my mind.

**06. Indu Liyanage – Indumini. Henagedara, Wattegama South, Dikwella
(Ruhunu Sisila)**

I am a widow with one child. Caring for my parents is also my responsibility. I face a lot of financial difficulties after my husband's death. I give individual lessons in Tamil, but the income generated from that is not adequate to meet all my financial responsibilities. Though I live in sadness from the day I lost my husband, when I was pregnant with our child, being able to be of service to children with disability, the village and society gives me happiness. The knowledge gained from this workshop is very valuable.

07. J.T. Kanthi – No. 283, Duwatte, Bathigama, Dikwella

I am a 44 year old married woman with two sons and two daughters. While one son has finished his education and is at home the other three are still continuing their education. My husband is working in the Brewery..

I enjoy social work very much. While the war causes fear of the future, if there were a possibility of taking a path towards peace, we could be happy about the future of our children.

08. Chandralatha Subasinghe – Suduwalla, Kottagoda

I am a married woman and a mother. While my husband is in the timber business, I provide a service for the village by being involved in committees and organizations. We had to face the tsunami due to our house being situated near the sea and though my entire family escaped with their lives, we witnessed the acute bereavement of other families around us. Though I lost property and possessions through this most fearful experience of my life, I made every effort to help others. With great effort we have managed to rebuild our business. I have gained much knowledge by participating in these workshops which will help me in my work with the many different organizations I am involved.

09. Prdeepika Hettiarachchi – Katavila Watte, Dandeniya Rathmale (Ruhunu Sisila)

I am an unmarried young woman whose parents are living and am an only child. Though I am qualified I am not employed. I serve as a Sunday school teacher. While holding office in committees and organizations, I am involved in the common activities of the village. I value the opportunity of being able to take a break from my monotonous life and participate in these workshops.

10. Imali Jayakuru – Thangalla Home, Higher Upparakka, Matara

I am a 22 year old young woman who is the second in a family of four. Our family is maintained entirely by my father's income. While I have studied up to the advanced level examinations at the Sujatha Vidyalyaya, I have every intention of developing my education and doing a job. I think that it is possible for young women like me to gain a knowledge about leadership through workshops such as these.

**11. Chandrani Dadallage – No. 173/E, Ranthilaka Watte, Paththegama South,
Kottegoda**

I am a married woman of 53 years and a mother of 8 children. I have a great enthusiasm for social service activities due to many personal problems I have had to face in my life and I find the work very consoling. 4 of my children are married and one out of the remaining four is in the army. Though my child has joined the army due to economic difficulties, my desire is to see Sri Lanka in the future as a peaceful country free from war.

12. D.G. Shriyani – Liyanagewatte, Pathegama/South, Kottagoda

I am a married woman with 4 children. While my eldest son is serving in the army, the other three children are engaged in educational activities. I have established a woman's organization comprising of about 150 members by the name of Samagi.

While performing welfare activities through this organization, I also take care of all my duties as a wife within the home. The most painful incident of my life has been, my husband being arrested by the police under a false accusation but I managed to correct the falsehood and bring him home. The war is a huge stress to my mind and I live in fear for my son. My one request as a mother of a soldier is for peace to be brought about in some way. I think that there is a lot I can absorb from these work shops and this knowledge is very important for social service activities of the future.

13. Priyani Hettiarachchi – No.21, Sooriya Arachchige Watte, Pathegama / South

I am a 27 year old woman who is the youngest of a family of 9 children. I have 5 older brothers and 3 sisters. I have studied up to ordinary level examinations and am expecting to get married to a soldier. I live in fear because of the war and pray that we will be able to live in peace, free from war. I believe that I was able to get an understanding of how to take up leadership as a woman by participating in these workshops.

14. K. Amarasinghe – Gunasevana, Dandeniya (Ruhunu Sisila)

I am an unmarried woman of 64 who has born the responsibility of my family since the death of my father. My mother died after having given my younger brother and two sisters in marriage. I cared for and brought up my niece (younger sister's daughter) while my sister did a job and was there for me. Currently I work taking leadership in the support committee and also spend time meditating. I live in fear for two of my nephews who are in the army. It is a pleasure to be able to participate in programmes such as these.

15. H. S. Chandrani – Mahaveediya, Parana Kade, Waligama (Ruhunu Sisila)

While I am unmarried, I live with my married sister and help her with the income I generate by selling clothes which I sew, as self employment. I hold office in committees and organizations. Though there is no life free from sadness and issues, I like to be of help to others. I believe that I was able to share experiences and gain knowledge by participating in these programmes.

16. Daya Kanthi Kasthuriarachchi – Sanjewani, Pathegama, Kottegoda

I am the eldest daughter of a family of twelve. While my husband is a three wheel driver, I am self employed producing coir rope carpets. Though we did not suffer loss of property or lives due to the tsunami, having witnessed the disaster by being in a bus at the Mathara bus stand at that moment, the tsunami is a most fearful and unforgettable occasion in my life. I still hear the screaming of the people. Though these incidents cause stress in my mind, I live a relaxed life. also I believe that by participating in these programmes I was able to gain knowledge useful to life.

17. W.G. Leelawathi – Paranawatte, Thalalla North, Kakanadura (Ruhuna Sisila)

I am a married woman living with my husband, son, daughter in law and grandson. Though we suffered privation when the children were small, my husband and I built up our life with our joint effort. I earned an additional income by producing and selling sweetmeats. Though I live a relaxed and amicable life with others, I cannot forget the hardships of the past. I am involved in social service to a small extent and the knowledge gained from these programmes is of great value to that work.

18. Lasanthi Edirisinghe – No. 26, Suriyarachchi Watte, Kottegoda

I am a 37 year old married woman with one child. While I and my family suffered greatly due to financial hardship when I was a child, I studied up to the ordinary level exams. My sisters are married and live separately. It is a great happiness to me that I live in the main house with my husband, child and father. I went abroad for employment and returned before my marriage. My mother's death was an occasion I could not bear. As a woman I enjoy being able to be involved in many social activities. I believe I have gained a multitude of knowledge through these workshops.

19. Shanthi Hettiarachchi – Parana Gedara, Pathegama/South, Kottegoda

I am a 24 year old unmarried woman who's parents are living. While my elder brother and sister are married, my younger sister is engaged in educational activities. The suicide of one of my sister's is still an occasion of great sadness. My family and I live in fear because both my brother and brother in law, work in the north and we all pray that this war would end and we would be able to live in peace. I value the opportunity of participating in these workshops..

20. D.G. Damayanthi – Liyanagewatte, Pathegama/South, Kottegoda

I am 36 years old, unmarried and the eldest daughter of a family of seven including the parents. Three of the children are married. Since the death of my father when I was 8 years old, my mother maintained the family with the income she generated by being engaged in the coir industry. I regret not having married when I was younger and also am sad about my father's death. I believe that a woman who is under mental strain like me can experience a change from her monotonous life by participating in these programmes.

Galle District

01. T. W. Surangi – Ganegoda, Udagama

I am a married woman of 18 years. My husband who is 20 years of age is serving in the army. I live with my parents together with my older brother and younger sister. I have two older sisters who are married. My brother serves in the army and my younger sister is engaged in educational activities. I am involved in committees and organizations. Though society corners us due to our poor financial situation, our relations are good to us and helpful. The war is fearful and we pray that it can be stopped and peace brought to the country in some way. I am happy with these workshops which helped me to rid myself of the fear I had of moving forward. I believe that it would be useful for those in the army to participate in such programme.

02. Devika Priyanthi Nanayakkara – Gamagoda, Udugama

I am an unmarried woman of 38, living with my parents. I have three sisters out of which one is in the village, the elder is teaching in the Maha Vidyalaya and the younger sister is studying for an external degree. I have studied up to advanced level and followed classes in sewing and cookery. The most painful experience of my life has been the murder of my father by the JVP when I was 19. This pain is permanent and since this incident my mother's thinking is not stable, even today she is under medication. I am fearful of the war and pray that it would end. I enjoy social work and am very happy with these workshops which included every one in the activities and helped to dispel the fears and doubts we had within us. I also value the information gained and hope to participate in similar programmes in the future.

03. U.W.A. Mala Damayanthi - Galkatigoda Watte, Kithulampitiya, Galle

50 year old Mala is the eldest in a family of 10. her own family of 4 include herself, her husband and two children. While her husband is an electrician, one of the two children are employed. She is involved in home gardening and the production of rush items as a livelihood and is a person who works taking leadership in common activities and is a member of 5 village committees. She fought between life and death at the birth of her first child. They lived in a tin shed as they had no home and her husband gambled all his earnings. While she got help from all the committees she joined, the Agromart Foundation and the National Crafts Committee take precedence. Malani says that these are the committees which stood by and encouraged her by obtaining help from national and international tourists. Mala lives in a rented house. Other than a house of her own she has achieved every thing as a persevering and exemplary woman. She expects as a woman to be of great service to the country, village and neighbors in working towards peace. It is not only because her son is a soldier in the navy that she prays that peace would dawn soon and she would be able to live with her child in peace.

04. T. H. Vijitha Sarojini - 225/B, Hettigedara Watte, Kithulampitiya

A married woman of 47 years with two children twins aged 16 who are attending school. Husband is a security officer for the local government. Studied up to year 11. Involved in treacle industry and sewing carpets for sale at home for income generation. Assist in educational activities of children. The biggest problem we face is that due to our house being situated in low lands we are affected very badly by floods and all the goods and furniture in the house is washed away. The school going period was a very happy time for me. I had to bear the entire responsibility of the family from the time my father died when I was 22 years old. I have three younger brothers. After my father died I went to work at a factory. The family moved forward in the midst of many hardships. Subsequently my brother joined the army and started helping the family. Recently he moved to Haiti and met with an accident. I still cry for that pain. I can be happy about my husband.

My husband likes my involvement in social service. While I have been involved in social service since I was young, I currently hold membership with several committees and organizations. I am very happy about these activities and think it is very good compared to all other programmes. It is 22 years since a sibling of mine went to war. I am very scared. Two other relatives are also in the army. I am very proud of the army. I am happy now the war is going to end. I will respect these ideas even in the future. My eldest daughter expects to join the army.

05. K.R. Nandani – Manigewatte, Katagoda

A 37 year old married woman with two sons aged 18 & 20. The older son is serving in the security forces at Thoppigala and the younger son is at home. The husband cultivates tea and the son helps him. Have had family problems and my mother helped me, I am very sorry that she has passed away two years ago. but now things are improved my husband is ok now. Very happy to be a part of this programme as I am able to learn from it. This is different from other programmes I have attended. I am happy about that.

06. P. K. Wasana Nishadi - 18 Kanuwa, Nakiyadeniya, Udugama

I am 20 years old. My father works for the Agricultural department and my mother makes ice cream and puts into shops for sale. I have a younger brother who has sat for the ordinary level examinations and is currently at home. I followed a course in theatre studies and took part in events at school. I expect to start my own business. The day my grandmother died was a very painful day. Many people die because of the war. I have an uncle serving in the war. The cost of goods rise because of the war. Even hearing of bombs makes me afraid. These workshops were very good as they helped us to overcome the fear we had of speaking out. We were happy and entertained and I would like to continue in the programme as I think that it will make a change in my life.

07. K.K. Eranga Kumudu Chathurika

Eranga who was born on 25.08.1989 is the third in a family of four. Her parents are living. Eranga who has studied up to ordinary level examinations is currently the treasurer of the Navodya Foundation. They did not have economic difficulties during her school days because her father was engaged in a government job. It was her own preference to go into employment instead of continuing her education. Even though people have criticized the organization she works for, Eranga has not had to face blame from anyone.

She says the war should stop. It is people who die on all sides and they all live in Sri Lanka. The war should be stopped in some way because all who are dying and are living in fear are citizens of our country and the country needs these citizens. Ending the war soon would bring benefits to the country and the people. If the war is to continue, a child from each family should be sent to fight in the war, in order for all parents to experience the pain felt by those parents who have lost children in the service of the army.

08. Namali Sandya Wikramanayaka - 241/A, Sanasuma, Katagoda

A 35 year old married woman with three children. Husband is a sergeant serving in the army headquarters. My eldest daughter is in year 10, the son is in year 5 and the youngest daughter is in year 2. My father did a job while my mother was a housewife. I have an older brother who works for the Agrarian Services office. my parent are alive and I have brought them to live with me.

09. D. H. Chandrakanthi – 250, Katagoda

A married woman of 50 years with three sons aged 27, 25 and 23. Husband is an industrial officer in the Udugama depot. I had problems with my husband due to his unfaithfulness. I even suffered from depression apart from my physical problems. To day is the first day I was able to ventilate my grievance. I live happily now. It is because I enjoy social work that I participate in such workshops. I would be very happy if the war were to stop. I liked this workshop very much and will participate in similar workshops in the future.

10. G.P. Sujampika - 18 Kanda Udugama Road, Nakiyadeniya

She is a married woman of 39 with two children. A 18 year old son and 16 year old daughter. The husband is the owner of a bakery. Though I had many problems from my husband I have managed to build my life to a good standard with my own efforts. It is good if the war would end. I am happy about these two days which were a change from my day to day life. I know I will get a relief from these two days. I look forward to participating in this programme till the end.

11. K.G. Lalani Malika - No. 56, Kadiragaman village, Kurunduwatte

A married woman with three children, a daughter aged 16 and two sons aged 13 and 11. My husband works as a security officer in the private sector. I sew clothes for self employment. Though we lost all property and possessions due to the tsunami, no lives of our family were lost but we faced all the experiences of tsunami. I am currently continuing my sewing industry. I engage in social work. The saddest experience of my life is the tsunami. The thought that I was able to be of help to others brings happiness to my life. The war is like our tsunami. The Tamil population has become defenseless. We do not know if the war would end in the future and cannot give appropriate answers. We should be of assistance to those who are displaced. These workshops are very good. I can be happy about it and will participate in them until the end.

12. K.K. Kamani Chandrika - 18 Kanda Udugama Road, Nakiyadeniya

Kamani Chandrika born on 11/09/1962, is the fourth of a family of six. She is married with two children. Her husband is a government servant and she maintains a small business in food preparation. She went into depression because of her mother's death but with medical treatment she is now better. She says that she has a certain amount of resistance from her husband when engaging in social service activities because of his extreme love for her. While her goal is to be of some service to her area and would consider herself very lucky if she were able to achieve this with her husband's approval. It is her goal to bring a successful leadership to her area through this workshop and work as a guide towards the improvement of the area. Her one desire is that the war would end soon. She values the existence of peace in the country as in the family.

13. Nanda Gamage - 193/2 Katagoda, Udugama

A married woman of 66 with a family of 5. Husband is retired from the army. She had not been able to sit for the advanced level examinations due to her marriage. Have lived in many different areas of the country due to the husband's job. They have built their house on a land received from the government. She speaks lovingly of her husband saying that he is very helpful to her. She has worked to unite several families in her area. Because these families are united, they are willing to listen and accept what each other say. She says that she is proud that their neighbors respect her family. She says her husband is supportive of her social work. At the time of the tsunami her only son had been in Trincomalee. She shows fear even to think of that time. War is not a blessing and we should focus our attention on peace. It is not important to differentiate as Sinhala and Tamil because as Sri Lankans we are all one race.

14. Yasa Hewavitharna – Katagoda, Udugama North

58 year old Yasa who is unmarried is the third in a family of six. She lives in the parental home with her four sisters. The floods of 2003 was an occasion of extreme shock to her. To this day she can hear the cries of the people. It was because her house was situated on higher land that on that occasion she was able to come to the assistance of others by providing food and clothing. She likes to live in unity with every one bringing all race together. Now that the end is near, it is good that the war will end through war itself as long as it is a permanent solution and not just a temporary one. While her entire family live in unity and peace, she is in the forefront of social service activities in the Udugama area.

15. G.K. Indrani Jayalakshmi - Nuwan Piyasa, Katagoda, Udugama

I am a 45 year old married woman with 4 children. While the husband is a farmer, he is also engaged in other income generating activities. Now her husband helps her with the social work. War is terrible. Anyone who goes out their homes, live in fear until they return. She says she would like the war to end even through war itself. Indarni says she looks forward to being of service to society in the future.

16. M.K. Padmawathi – Ukwatte, Gingoda

She is a 53 year old married woman with a family of six, including herself and her husband. Husband is a carpenter. She has her husband's assistance in her social work. Even though no harm came to her or her family due to the tsunami they suffered damage to their property. While she says, she would send her son to serve in the army if she had one, she feels great pain for the soldiers fighting in the war. It is better to go for peace negotiations than to go for war. She says that because of being a good citizen necessary to the country peace is essential.

17. U.G. Chandrawathi - No.07, Justin Kanda, Galle

She is a 56 year old married woman with 5 children. Husband maintains a self employment scheme for income generation and is helpful towards her social service activities. She has helped those affected by the tsunami through her organization. We should not act selfishly when people are dying in the war. What is more important is to share power and work to achieve peace, specially remembering that we are all citizens of Sri Lanka. This is Chandra's expectation.

18. Benuka Wathugedara- No. 23, 1st Lane, Madapathala, Galle

A 39 year old married woman with two sons aged 11 and 6. While my husband is self employed, I help him in his duties and manage the finances. I have been involved in social service since I was young and have studied up to advanced level.

When speaking of the war it is political gain. The needs of the Tamil people have not been met. This situation has arisen because the Tamil community was not listened to. It is the army who know the solutions to the war. The only way is for peace to be born.

I am very happy about these workshops and have found them valuable.

19. E.G. Ariyawathi – 187, Katagoda Junction, Udagama

A 59 year old married woman with 4 children. Husband is a registrar. I am engaged in tea cultivation. I am the treasure of rural development committee, member of a rural bank and a member of emergency services committee and live a fulfilled life. I feel afraid when I think of the war. We need to win the war and I believe this will happen soon. I will share the knowledge gained from this programme with other women. I live in expectation of peace at the end of the war.

20. Tiroma Wathugedara – Madapathala, 1st Lane, Galle

A 36 year old woman who is the third in a family of six. Educational activities were continued amongst economic difficulties. After higher education she learned several technical subjects suitable for self employment. Have worked in the health services for nine years. The Navodya organization was established by them. Most of what we have learnt is from life experiences. The tsunami is the most unfortunate situation I have faced in my life. In that situation I provided maximum assistance to others.

While those who suffer most from war are the general public, the war affects all from the young children to old people. Peace can be built through the sharing of power. We can achieve peace if we work with an attitude of independence. War renders women defenseless to a great extent. While there is a lot one as a woman can do about peace, It is important to understand one's duties and participate in these activities.

21. Sujeewa Samanthi. - 82/2, Richmond Kanda Road, Galle

Samanthi is a 32 year old woman who belongs to a family of four. Her husband is engaged in the jewelry industry. While Samanthi helped to establish the Navodhya Foundation, she is currently the president of the Galle district branch of that organization. Her husband is a huge strength to her in her social work as well as in her duties at home. Though her family and she were not affected by the tsunami, she helped those who were to a great extent. According to her, those who were affected by the tsunami are today in a very strong situation.

While a solution to war can be found only in sharing of power and not by war, it is the innocent people suffer stress through war. The loss of those who can bear the responsibility of the country, through war, is a problem which cannot be solved. Her goal is to enter politics in the future.

22. K.P.G. Dulanjalee Lakshika Madushani - Katugahahena, Madapathara, Akmeemana

Dulanjalee who was born on 06/09/1991 is the second of a family of five. They did not suffer economic hardships through her education and school days as her father was a government servant. As she preferred doing a job to continuing her education, she did not complete her advanced level examinations. She enjoys her job as a social worker. She does not approve of the war. She anticipates peace through negotiations and not through war as a solution. She says that it is women who suffer most due to war and it is her prayer that it ends soon.

Kalutara District

01. Mallika Pathiraja- Bolosseagama

A pre school teacher who bears office in many village committees and organizations. She thinks that it would be good if the war ends soon and peace dawns. As her brother serves in Omantha, she feels keenly the fear and danger of the war. While she has begun the path to a peaceful existence within her family, she says that mutual respect between parents and children is essential.

02. Sumali Vidharshika, Morogolla, Beruwala

Sumali is a woman who has faced many experiences during the tsunami. Though she ran away with difficulty and managed to save her life when the tsunami occurred six days after her confinement, she was weak and suffered for a long time due to the dirty water. Her house and property could not be saved because her house was situated about 150 meters from the coast. She suffers emotional stress about this and even today she would rather not talk about it as it is the most fearful experience in her life. She says that on that day people provided food and clothing to those gathered in the temples without any expectation of reward. She sees the tsunami as an instance when the goodness of people were brought out.

03. Sumanawathi Saranguhewa – Pre school foundation - Kalutara

She has complete her O/L's and has obtained a special certificate from the Co-corporative Institute of Polgolla. Though both her own and her daughter's house was lost in the tsunami, she has rebuilt all that was lost through her own efforts. It was by demonstrating the importance of example over advice that she said that as women we should work hard for peace. She is respected within her family and those in the area because of her calm qualities.

04. Manel Fernando – Diriya Women's and Children's Development Foundation, Kalutara

Manel is the eldest in a family of nine. She puts into good practice the skills of listening and patience related to peace building. She is not only a social worker but a loving mother and wife. She has the skill to work in both Sinhala and English languages.

05. A.V.K. Karunathunga – Pre-school foundation

Vajira is a representative of an insurance company and also engaged in sewing. She lives in the midst of many difficulties with her husband and children. Vajira says while she gathered much from this programme, she has made a definite decision to live in peace with her own family before she thinks of the peace of the country.

06. Anushka Sandamali Siriwardana - Pre -school foundation

She is the youngest in the family; her financial strength is the maintenance of a pre school and her parents are a constant strength to her. She stated that participating in these workshops gave her the opportunity to gain much knowledge and experiences in many different fields which she values very much. Anushka who lives in unity with all her family, is an exemplary teacher to her pre school students. Her goal is to perform her duties to her greatest ability, if she gets the opportunity to be of service to the society. She considers having been able to help those displaced by tsunami a good fortune.

07. M.M.M. Dissanayake

She is a widow with five children and had grown up in the south. As an external degree holder she has managed to build her life successfully and educate her children since her husband went missing, with her own efforts. She ran for local government office and was successful but though she contested in provincial council elections she was not successful. While holding office in committees and organizations she is committed in her political seat to serve the people of the area. She also works in partnership with the police to build and protect the peace in the area and has feeling of great reward through social service.

08. Chandra Kaluarachchi – National Pre -School Development Foundation

Chandra is a widowed woman with three children. While two of the children are employed, one child is following an external degree. It is four years since her husband died. Her main goal is to bring up her children and live a good life. She does not have any other special goal.

09. J.T.S. Padmalatha – Diriya Kantha Foundation

She is the seventh in a family of ten. The support she gets from home and the training she has received has helped her to succeed in her duties. She says, difficulties in transport facilities is a huge challenge she has faced in her duties and has been an obstacle to her performing tasks on time. She is today an accepted and essential social worker in her area and is committed to achieving a positive situation within the family and the village.

10. K.K. Danawathi – Diriya Women's and Childrens Organization

Danawathi who is the eldest in a family of six, is married and has three sons. While her husband is a farmer, two of her sons are employed. She says that her husband and family are extremely supportive of her social service activities. While she takes leadership in social work, she says she is valued because of the differences in her activities. Being able to work on time and the support she has from her family has resulted in her success. She looks forward to becoming a leader accepted by society.

11. J.A. Pushpalatha

I have my husband's support in all my work. I am very happy about this programme and teach every thing I learn to my husband. The war in our country is a great fear in my mind. Even when we get into a bus, our lives are uncertain until we get out of it. We do what we can to end war and build peace at a village level. Many issues could be minimized if we had the patience to listen to the needs of others.

12. Malkanthi Gunathilaka – Pre School Development Foundation

Malkanthi, an environmental enthusiast, is a pre school teacher and is engaged in the sewing industry. She lives in disappointment because she has not been able to get a job according to her qualifications. It is her idea that war has to end if we are to achieve peace and she lives in expectation of performing necessary duties to bring about peace. Malkanthi is happy that she was able to help those who were affected by the tsunami.

13. Daya Kanthi Silva

We need peace not war. Our hearts are strong even if we need to go to war to achieve peace. It would be very helpful if these types of programmes could be held through out the field, as one of the biggest issues is the lack of knowledge in people. It is not possible to achieve expected results unless you speak in a language they understand. This programme speaks to our hearts and gives us the space to think. I am unmarried through my own choice and it has been the correct decision. I am able to be of great service to society because of my independence.

14. P.D. Kanchana Rasangani – Pre- school Development Foundation

Rasangi who is married is engaged in sewing activities and her husband works in the aluminum business. Her husband is a great strength to her in her social work. She is still an armature in social service. She says that this programme was a great satisfaction to her. Her one goal for the future is to become a good social worker and leader and she will strive to achieve this goal as a successful mother and house wife.

15. Padma Ariyalatha Wijesinghe

My husband is retired from the S.T.F. and is a huge strength to me in all my activities. Even though the tsunami destroyed all our possessions, we have managed to rebuild everything because of our strength. I believe that people helped us in that situation out of a mutual sense of humanity. I am very much afraid of the war as we have lost many things because of it as in the tsunami.

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