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Tamil Refugee Action Group

தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கை குழு



20th Anniversary

20வது ஆண்டு

நிறைவு விழா மலர்

30.10.05



The Gateway to Tamil Identity

Mission Statement

The relief of need, hardship distress and sickness of Tamils from Sri Lanka and their dependents who are homeless and displaced as a result of communal riots and violence in Sri Lanka or who have become refugees through well founded fear of persecution by reason of race.

Pledge

TRAG is committed to providing effective and quality service to Tamil Refugees in accordance with its aims and objectives which include the equal opportunity policy.

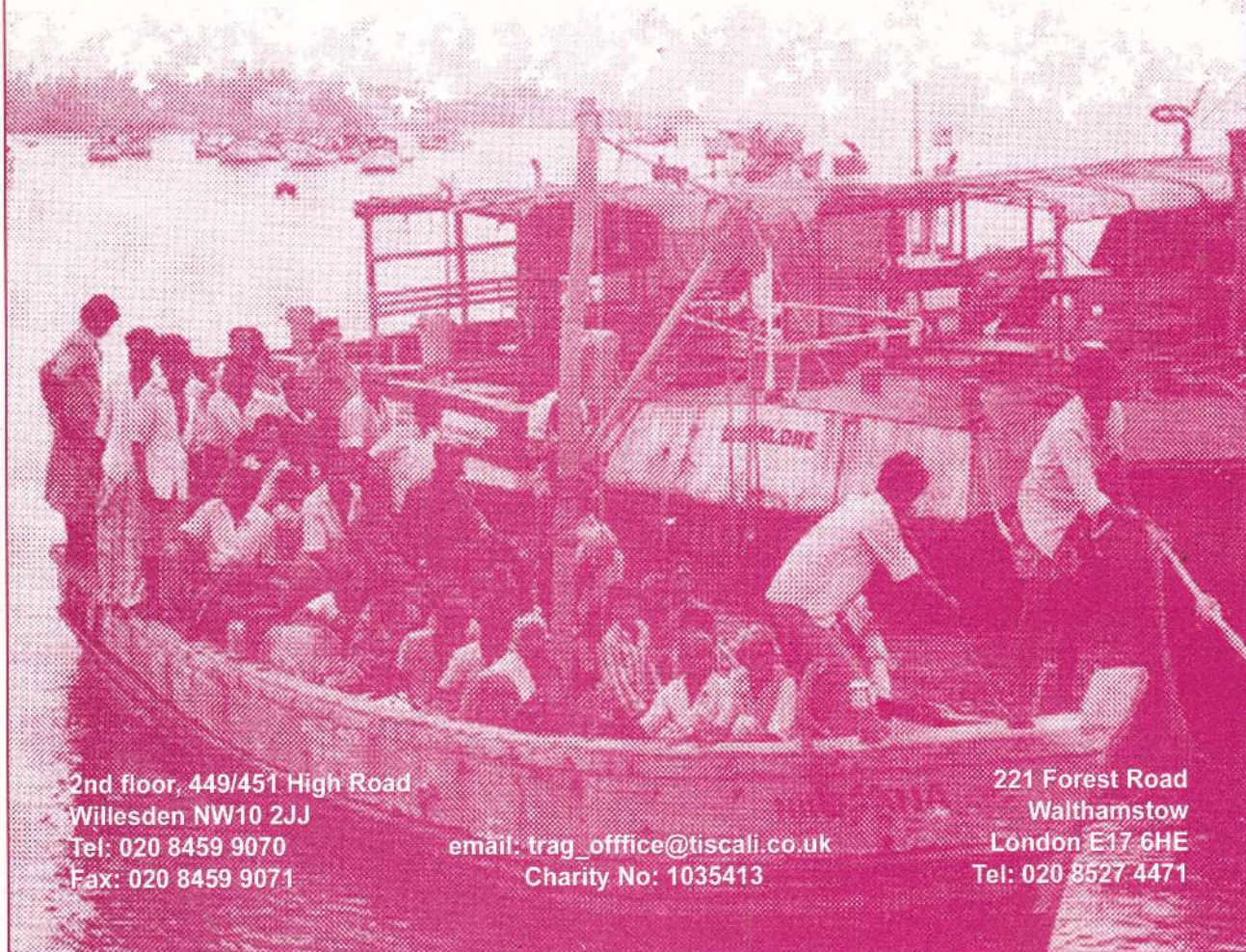
Who is a refugee?

A refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...'

Article 1, 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees

Who is an asylum seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is waiting for a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee. In other words, in the UK an asylum seeker is someone who has asked the Government for refugee status and is waiting to hear the outcome of their application.



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Charity No: 1035413

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வாழ்த்துப்பாடல்

கலைத் தாயே உனை நாடி -தினம்
வந்தோம் கவி பாடி
எமையாள உனை வேண்டி - வரம்
கேட்டோம் தருவாயே.....!

தமிழ் என்ற மொழியாளே - கணம்
காக்கும் துணையாளே
மனம் எல்லாம் நிறைகின்ற - அரும்
பெரும் இனத்தாளே
விளைகின்ற பயிரானோம் - மலர்
பாதம் பணிகின்றோம்
துணையெல்லாம் தந்தெம்மை
உயிராகி காப்பாயே.....!

கலைத்தாயே.....

அலைந்தவர் வாழ்வுக்கு
வழி தேடித் தந்தோரே
இரு பத்து ஆண்டாக
பணி காத்த மதியோரே
வழியின்றி விழித்தோரை
துணை நின்று காப்போரே
TRAG என்ற சொல்லாலே
மார்க்கத்தை தந்தோரே....!

கலைத்தாயே.....

தமிழ் என்ற உணர்வுக்கு
மகிழ்வுட்டி நின்றோரே
உலகெல்லாம் எமைப் பார்க்க
உயிர் தந்து உயர்ந்தோரே
கருவுற்ற தமிழ் தாயே
வணங்கிடும் வரத்தோரே
ஈழத்தின் உயிர்க் காற்றே
பணிகின்றோம் சிரம் தாழ்த்தி

கலைத்தாயே.....

கலைப் பற்று உடையோரே - தமிழ்ப்
பற்று கொண்டோரே
கலை விழா தனைக் காண
வந்திட்ட பெரியோரே
அவை வந்து அமர்ந்தோரே
சபையாகி நிற்போரே
தமிழ் தாயின் வணக்கங்கள்
வரவேற்றோம் வரவேற்றோம்

கலைத்தாயே.....

இயற்றியவர் பாசையூர் செபமணியர் (சுரியர்)

The Gateway to Tamil Identity

FOREWORD

We welcome you to have a glimpse of the work of an organisation which has been a sanctuary for Tamil refugees in the U.K.

Tamil Refugee Action Group, called TRAG began in 1985, in response to the plight of refugees from Sri Lanka. The breadth and complexity of its work has increased in the twenty years of its founding, incorporating response to emergencies such as the virulent pogroms against Tamils resulting in the mass exodus from Sri Lanka in May 1985 and the enactment of restrictive legislation affecting Tamils classed as "economic migrants" in the U.K.

TRAG has also been a lead agency in many community development initiatives *since*, which has transformed the lives particularly of minority ethnic communities besides Tamils including Eritrean, Ghanaian, Kurdish, Iranian, Somalian, Turkish and Ugandan refugees in U.K. Throughout the last two decades, its primary focus has been on human rights and in particular championing the rights of women and children.

It now works mainly through long term community based development, in the field of social integration, health promotion, women welfare and counselling, besides immigration, education and housing assistance.

TRAG works through collaborative relationships with relevant agencies to ensure sensitive continuity of support.





BUCKINGHAM PALACE

12th October, 2005

Dear Mr. Moorthy,

The Queen has asked me to thank you for your letter of 6th September and to say that Her Majesty was grateful for your kind invitation to attend the Twentieth Anniversary of the Tamil Refugee Action Group on 30th October, 2005. However, as The Queen's programme is arranged many months in advance and has already been finalised for that time, it will not be possible for Her Majesty to accept.

I am sorry to send you a disappointing reply, but I hope that the evening will be a successful and enjoyable occasion for all who take part in it.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Sonia Bonici
Senior Correspondence Officer

S.V. Moorthy, Esq.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to send this message on the historical moment of the 20th Anniversary celebration. I am proud to be part of it. My association with the organisation commenced in 1989 when I became Chair. I was Chair for 4 years in the first ten years. Thereafter, I was elected Chair again in 1997 and re-elected every year from that time onwards to date.



I am happy to state that the organisation has grown from strength to strength and the service we provide is well appreciated by the users, funders, partners, local authorities and other providers of community services.

As far as the funding is concerned, this year marks a milestone. We received funding from Community Fund / Big Lottery Fund, Comic Relief, for the existing posts of Co-ordinator, Case-worker and Health Promotion Worker.

Womens Outreach Worker was funded by City Parochial Foundation up to a maximum period allowed in terms of their policy. Unfortunately, this service provided by us came to an end in July this year. However, I am pleased to state that Bridge House Trust made a grant in July 2005 in the sum of £24,900, to cover for the period of three years for "Elders support and Outreach service." A further grant of £60,000, has been received on 26 September 2005 from The Henry Smith Charity, for a Women's Welfare Worker, spread over a period of three years (£20,000 for each year). Another grant of £4954.00 was received on 24 August 2005 from "Awards for All" for Domestic Violence Women Welfare Worker to enable us to employ a person for two days-a week a Domestic Violence Women Welfare Worker.

We have also received on 10 October 2005 an additional single grant of £5,000, from Garfield Weston Foundation for "Domestic Violence work mainly concerning women".

No doubt all the above grants would help our organisation to provide further services and employment opportunities for at least two more persons.

Our organisation provides quality service in Immigration including asylum, welfare, employment, housing, Health Promotion and other refugees related issues.

We have been in the frontline for the past 20 years in providing humane and humanitarian service to the most vulnerable people in the Tamil community. We would commit ourselves to continue such service for many years to come.

We were able to do this because of our staff who are well experienced and able to act with cultural sensitiveness and with a proper understanding of the problems at grass roots level.

It remains for me to thank all the Management Committee members past and present for their support and co-operation and the spirit of service in giving their valuable time on a voluntary basis. Equally the Management Committee appreciates with grateful thanks of the commitment, dedication and professionalism showed by the staffs past and present. and in particular, Mr. S. Karunanandarajah, Co-ordinator, Mr.R. Navanayagam, Case-worker, Dr. S. Kithirgamu, Health Promotion Worker and Mrs Sugi Gobiratnam Women Welfare Worker. The Management Committee also wish to thank all the volunteers past and present.

We also very much appreciate the financial support and encouragement given to us by all the funders, past and present, without their help it would not have been possible to achieve many things which we are able to do.

We also wish to remember with gratitude our off-shoots, TCHA and TR-TEC who have brought credit to our organisation.

C. Sithamparapillai
Chair

TAMIL REFUGEE ACTION GROUP

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I am glad to be in the management committee, which celebrates twenty years of service to Tamil community in United Kingdom. Over the last fifteen years I have witnessed the relentless service of TRAG in the field of assisting Tamil asylum seekers in matters relating to immigration and Health and Welfare.

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In the recent years TRAG expanded its service in to new dimensions to meet the needs of the community. We had a women welfare worker who was exclusively serving the needs of Tamil women and we also provided teaching in beginners English.

Next year TRAG will be providing service to those who are affected by domestic violence also.

TRAG endeavour to deliver best service to Tamil community in the fields which are most relevant. We are constantly evaluating our works and aspiring to meet the needs of our community.

We have a dedicated team of management committee members who works on a voluntary basis to serve the Tamil community. We are also proud of a hard working and service minded group of staff to deliver the service to members of the Tamil community.

I have no doubt that TRAG will continue to deliver its service to the highest quality for many years to come.

Dr. K. Balendran
Hon. Secretary TRAG

Mr C. Sithamparapillai
Chairman

Mr S.V. Moorthy
Vice Chairman

Dr K. Balendran
Secretary

Mr N. Kugapala
Treasurer

Mr V.E. Cherubim
Assistant Treasurer

Mr S. Varathalingam

Dr R. Somalingam

Mr S. Velupillai

Mr T. Thirunavukarasu

Dr A. Thurairajah

Mrs K. Maheswaran

Mrs A. Kuhachandran



COMMUNITY
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Let's make money & difference

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CITY PAROCHIAL
FOUNDATION



STEPHEN TIMMS MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 4000
Fax: 020 7219 2949

Labour Member of Parliament for East Ham

Tamil Refugee Action Group
449-451 High Road
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London
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17 October 2005

Dear Friends

I write to congratulate you on achieving your twentieth anniversary, and to pay tribute to your achievements on behalf of the community over that period.

Over the past twenty years, the Tamil community has become very well established in the area I represent in the House of Commons. With every month that passes, the economic achievements of the community become increasingly visible. My colleague and friend – and TRAG Founder – Cllr Paul Sathianesan – often points out to me the growing scale of investment from the Tamil community in High Street North in Manor Park. The area is becoming a lively and colourful showcase for the community. Investment from the community is playing a big part in reviving the whole area, making a major contribution as we plan for the Olympic Games in seven years time. And the Games will present excellent prospects for the Tamil community too, as we look forward to improved facilities and new business opportunities over the next few years.

I wish you a very happy evening of celebration, and many years of fruitful service to the community ahead.

With all best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

STEPHEN TIMMS MP

Harry Cohen MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA



Mr C Sithamparapillai
Chair
Tamil Refugee Action Group
449/451 High Road
Willesden
London
NW10 2JJ

Our Ref: TRAG001/050464

18 October 2005

Dear Mr Sithamparapillai

I am pleased to have had a supportive role in the founding of the Tamil Refugee Action Group (TRAG) twenty years ago and pay tribute to those who have made the Group a success over those years and helped very many Tamil refugees escape danger in their homeland and settle, with their families, in this country.

In those early years, especially, I also helped many Tamil refugees have their plight recognised by UK Immigration officials and so be allowed to settle here. I have also helped my constituents, of Tamil origin, resolve many other problems they have sought my help with.

TRAG can be justly proud of its activity. Tamils in the UK have contributed in all walks of life and different modes of work and business making this country a better place. Overwhelmingly, it is a law-abiding, family-oriented community, keen to see their children well-educated and getting on.

My support for TRAG, and the Tamil community as a whole, remains. I will do all I am able to support my constituents of Tamil origin move forward with their lives.

My very best wishes to you, and to all who attend your Cultural Event on Sunday 30th October. I hope that it is a very enjoyable occasion

Yours sincerely

Harry Cohen MP

HARRY COHEN MP

DR. LIAM FOX, MP. (Woodspring)



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10 October, 2005

To: THE TAMIL REFUGEE ACTION GROUP

I am very sorry that constituency engagements will prevent me from attending your 20TH Anniversary Celebration on 30 October. I wish you continuing success with the valuable work being achieved by TRAG and I hope that the occasion is a successful and happy one. With very best wishes.

*Yours sincerely,
Liam Fox*

Tamil Refugee Action Group
221 Forest Road
Walthamstow
London E17 6HE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

I am very pleased to be able to pay tribute to the Tamil Refugee Action Group on this important occasion. There some 70 000 Tamil people in living in the Greater London area, many of whom I am proud to call my friends.

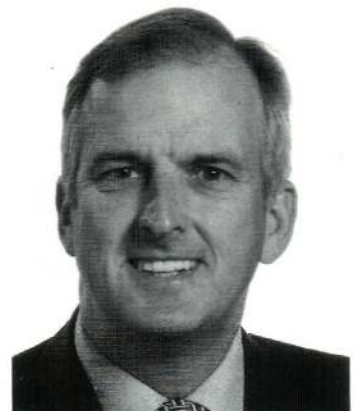
I have been to Sri Lanka many times in my capacity as an MEP and have travelled widely including visits to Jaffna and through the Vanni. I know from first hand experience the struggles and difficulties that Tamils in Sri Lanka have faced.

I know that the Tamil people in London are equally as hard working and industrious but like everyone else sometimes they need extra support. The TRAG helps asylum seekers and refugees with a wide range of needs that other bodies do not always provide.

From helping Tamil people learn English to accessing other education and welfare the TRAG provides an invaluable service and long may it remain. You can rely on me to support you in whatever way I can.

I send you all my very best wishes.

Robert Evans MEP



Andrew Dismore
Labour Member of Parliament for Hendon



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr. C. Sithamparapillai,
Chairman,
TAMIL Refugee Action Group,
2nd Floor,
449/451, High Road,
Willesden,
London, NW10 2JJ.

20th October 2005

Our Ref: C/05/98/0013

Please quote reference on all correspondence

Dear Mr Sithamparapillai,

Thank you for inviting me to your meeting on the 30th of October.

I am afraid I will not be able to come myself on the 30th of October due to existing commitments in the constituency, but I am very sure the event will go well.

TRAG has worked very hard to help the TAMIL community in London, a community which has needed considerable support over the years.

I congratulate TRAG on all the work that it has done to help and I am sure it will continue to go from strength to strength.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dismore".

Andrew Dismore
Member of Parliament for Hendon

HIDDEN HISTORY OF TAMILS IN U.K.

Britain has been a haven of refuge to many migrant communities prior to the Tamils arriving here in the early 1980s. There were the Nordic peoples, followed by the Flemish, the Italians, the Jewish people, followed by the Poles, the West Indian, African, those of the Asian subcontinent - migrants from India and Pakistan, not to mention the recent migrants from the European Union and most recently from Russia and the Eastern Bloc.

Migration is not a new phenomenon and is well recorded in British history. A complex mix of people have arrived in these shores at different times, through different channels (eg. Labour migration, asylum, family union, for education and for professional advancement) and through different means (legal entry, illegal entry, smuggling in containers, overstaying etc.).

"There have also been many waves of migrants who have come to Britain with very different statuses (citizen, resident, student, visitor, work permit holder, refugee, asylum seeker, exceptional leave to remain (ELR), humanitarian protection (HP) indefinite leave to remain (ILR), among other known categories.

"The migration of Sri Lankan Tamils to Britain took place in three main waves (Daniel and Thangaraja, 1995). Like those who came from the majority Sinhalese community, the Tamils who migrated to Britain around and after independence in 1948 were largely professionals and students, who came for university or professional studies and were mainly from upper class backgrounds in Ceylon (later named Sri Lanka).

As the Sinhalese dominated government introduced discriminatory measures against the Tamil minority, increasing numbers sought to go abroad. This stream of migration increased in 1960's, after legislation was passed that made Sinhala the sole official language and thus devalued Tamil as one of the country's national tongues, with the result that relations between the two main elements or ethnic groups, Sinhalese (74%) Tamil (19%) degenerated into rival nationalism.

Second wave of Tamil migration to UK

Against this background, a second wave of migration of Tamils to Britain, gathered momentum, partly also to anticipate impending immigration legislation (Pirouet, 2001). The escalation of communal strife into civil war between the Government forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the early 1980's

brought in another wave of migration, which had three components: professionals who used their social capital and networks to gain entry into Britain; those who could afford to travel and could connect themselves through education, retraining (eg. as Doctors and Nurses), family reunion or limited sponsorship schemes and the last category, the poorer people who fled the hostilities at their homes in Sri Lanka after 1983.

Refugees - the third wave of migration

This latter group or the third wave of asylum seekers came to dominate Tamil migration to Britain as elsewhere (Canada, Switzerland, Australia and Scandinavian countries and France are other prominent destinations). There was according to Daniel and Thangaraja, 1995, evidence of tension between the different migration streams and cohorts of arrival, particularly among those who had served Britain in the WW II.

Tamils lived mainly then and now in London and are concentrated in places such as Tottenham, Walthamstow, East Ham, Southall, Wembley, Tooting, Lewisham and Croydon, though earlier migrants are more widely distributed throughout Britain.

Occupation prospects for Tamils

The Tamils of the first two waves secured positions in the public sector, some volunteering for the Armed force, others in such services as the NHS etc, in other white collar jobs and particularly in the professions.

Subsequent waves have ventured into many other avenues, especially into small businesses such as retail.

Tamil diaspora - subject of much debate

Given the disparate and volatile background, the size of the Tamil diaspora of Sri Lankan origin in the UK, is the subject of much debate, not least, because the UK Census has not distinguished Tamils from Sri Lankan nationals generally. A reasonable estimate of UK residents of Tamil population was around 70,000 to 100,000. (Today, it is estimated at over 150,000).

Like the other diaspora and reflecting the waves in which they arrived, the Tamil diaspora varies in its forms and levels of activity. Most are well networked not only among themselves, but also with the expatriate Tamils in UK.

It is noticeable that UK Tamils have a large number of organisations for the size of the population (as compared to other ethnic minorities here). These associations have allegiances to various parts of the North and East of the country, where most Tamils live and to professions, religious and educational networks.

Feature of Tamil organisations

Sometimes, political and class identities are represented in Associations and networks, and cleavages occur along these fault lines.

Tamil religious based organisations in Britain broadly include mostly Hindu, some Muslim and an active Christian population, *Alumni associations* (which form an important source of exchange of information, knowledge and transfer of resources for the development of the Schools and College network. *Professional organisations* contribute knowledge and finance toward infrastructure development. *Welfare organisations* that address the aftermath of the conflict also exist, (such as Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) Tamil Refugee organisations, South London Tamil Welfare Association, Tamil Relief Centre, Tamil Orphans Trust, to name a few). Besides, a *Gender related forum* (for instance, serves as well as general support for the re-settlement of Tamil refugees in Britain). TRAG and Tamil Relief Centre, both provide specialised services for female refugees who have experienced trauma. Organisations with a *Political orientation* also exist. (some empathise with factions involved in the political struggle in Sri Lanka)."

A report by the Economic and Social Research Council Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford for the Development for International Development (April 2005) highlights the above findings.

Tamils of all walks came to this country and have readily adjusted to mainstream Britain. This orientation is a noteworthy feature of Tamils in UK. Although they came here for a variety of reasons, including seeking refuge, but never have they imported their brand of civil unrest into Britain or hardly maintain a tendency for political dissent to change Britain.

Tamil resettlement without tears

In a recent report by the Commission for racial Equality (CRE), community cohesion is currently high on the political agenda, in large part, because of the violent community disorders in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, in the summer of 2004. The official reports that followed these disturbances, described fragmented and polarised communities lacking a strong sense civic identity and social values, as the root cause.

Besides, there have scarcely been any association of the Tamil diaspora in the UK, in the spate of recent bombing in London. This is in large measure due to the common vision and sense of belonging of Tamils in their place of abode and the strong and positive relationships developed between Tamils from different backgrounds, in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods in Britain.

Britain now has 58.9 million people (2001), speaking over 300 different languages and practising at least 14 different faith. The Tamils have settled and are happily integrated into this richly diverse and stable society. Although minor incidents of unsocial behaviour have been witnessed in some Boroughs in London, Tamils, by and large have not taken part in any disturbances and there appears to be no suggestion of Tamil attitudes towards the host country hardening at the present or in the forcible future. Anyone familiar with the early influx of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka will no doubt appreciate that Tamils have satisfactorily adjusted to their life in Britain and continue to do so. They continue to amaze mainstream Britain by their cultural heritage.



Immigration Workshop



Immigration Workshop



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The Chairman
Tamil Refugee Action Group
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13 September 2005

Dear Chairman

Thanks for your letter of the 06/09/05. I respond as follows :-

I have been privileged to be part of TRAG, a movement of grassroots concerns, combined in the solidarity and sustainability of good neighbourhoods and Community it serves. TRAG has been a pioneer in Community self help works at grassroots level.

I recall the day when we supported TRAG from deportations, bad Housing and help in Social Justice. The will of the TRAG People, its loyal members and dedicated staff have inspired the Organisation to be a key presence for the Tamil Community .

There is one struggle, one life, one victory.

TRAG LIVES ON

Yours sincerely

Ronnie Moodley, MBE
Chief Executive
ARHAG Housing Association Ltd

Registered Friendly Society No 23520 with charitable status
Housing Corporation Registration LH3811

A member of the National Federation of Housing Associations

Patron: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Wilfred Wood, Bishop of Croydon

Chairperson: Balraj Purewal

Chief Executive: Ronnie Moodley

The History of Tamil Refugee Action Group

Rajes Balasubramaniam

We will be celebrating 20 years achievement of Tamil Refugee Action Group in the U.K.. It was a great project, supported by all the Tamil groups in U.K.

Tamil Refugee Action Group was set up in 1985 to help the Tamil refugees who were escaping from various atrocities by the Sri Lankan government. Our aim was to provide welfare and the housing needs and also to give legal advice for the refugees.

In the spring of 1985 we had 1,336 Tamils apply for asylum in the U.K. Most were young Tamils under 25 years of age and many did not have any relations in the U.K.

The need for accommodation emerged rapidly. So, we decided to set up an organisation to help the Tamil refugees in the U.K..

Formation of Tamil Refugee Action Group.

The TRAG formed by the following individuals and organisations. The meeting was held at the Tamil women's League' office at 52 Acre Lane SW2 on the June 12th 1985.

The officers were:

1. Ms Rajes Bala : (Tamils Women's League)- Chair person
2. Mr. Ranji, secretary
3. Fr Elmo John Pillai , Treasure- Ealm Research Organisation
4. Mr. B. Ariyaratnam: (Ealam People information Centre)
5. Ms Veny Maheswaran- (Tamil Marumalarchi sangam)
6. Mr. Sathiathas- (Kalai Mantram)
7. Mr. Jeson Emmanuel – (Malarchi)

We developed a housing sector with a help from Bernie Grant MP for the refugees. We worked voluntarily and I was focusing on the co-ordination until 86 when we had some fund from London Boroughs grants Unit to employ Mr Varathakumar as a Co-ordinator.

We had links with many national and international organisations and took part in following national and international conferences and campaigns on refugee issues:

- GLC conference on Migrants and refugees -June 1985
- North Islington Black Section --Summer 85.
- -Organised a refugee recreation trip -October 85
- CEDRI (Centre of European defence for refugees and Immigration Conference) at Forcalquier, France May 85
- Bristol University, A seminar on Local Authorities and refugees

- City University, Western Media and the Portrayal of lack people and third world issues
- BBC, Open space programme on British refugee & Immigration rules and regulations
- Exhibition at BRC on refugee communities in Britain
- Anti deportation campaign Conference at Haringey council-December 1986
- Press Conference on deportation at the House Common Jan 87 with Jeremy Corbyn MP and Terry Field MP
- Organised a picket and demonstration in the front of Home Office to protest against the deportation of 58 Tamils -2.19.87
- BBC(Birmingham) Asian Programme
- A lobby with JCWI at the House of Common -March 87

To develop Tamil Refugee Action Group, there were various individuals and organisations gave their valuable time and their expert advice.

They were:

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn MP
 Mr . Ken Livingston -Leader GLC
 Mr. Bernie Grant Leader for Haringey Council
 Mr. Chris Smith MP
 Mr. Terry Field MP
 Mr. Dave Nellis Mp
 Mr. Tony Benn MP
 Mr. simon Huges MP
 Ms. Stephnie De Orey -Ethnic Minority Unit GLC
 Refugee Unit(UKIAS)
 JCWI(Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants)
 Mr. Ronny Moodly
 The Refugee Forum
 Brent Council
 Haringey Councillors, Clive Bootle and Steve Banergee and other staffs
 The Camden Council(Race Relation Unit and councillors)
 Islington council(Race relation Unit and Councillors)
 Ms. Maureen Connaly-UKIAS
 The British Refugee Council
 Ms. Jane Coker-Legal advice
 Tamil Information Centre
 Refugee Action (Mr.Sandy Buchan)
 Migrants ActionGroup
 Migrants Service Unit (Ms Mary Demac)
 Tamil Women' League(they gave their office to set up TRAG)
 Wimblton Ganapathy Temple

Archway Temple (Mr sabapathipillai and others)
 Standing Committee for Tamil Speaking People(SCOT)
 Malarchi
 Kalai mantram
 Tamil marumalarchi sangam
 Ealam people Information Centre
 ealam Research Organisation
 south London welfare Organisations
 Also many Black and Ethnic, Asians, women organisations in Britain.

We did the best we can to develop the organisation and to help our people who were in need. I hope it will continue to the same in the future to help our community in London.

Thank you

Rajes Bala :

(Founder Member and the first Chair for TRAG 1985-88).

47 ,Norman Avenue,
 woodgreen,
 London N22 5ES
 20.09.05

TRAG's
 youth Deaf Club Launch



Health
 Promotion
 Volunteers

Message from the Founder member and Co-ordinator at the Inception

It has been a pleasure, privilege and honour to be asked to write about the formation and establishment of the Tamil Refugee Action Group (TRAG).

Since 1983 a large number of Tamil refugees arrived and started living in the United Kingdom. At that time there was no proper organisation to take care of the needs and interests of the Tamil Refugees, who fled from their motherland to escape the oppression of the ruling party in their country. Tamils are very resilient people and are still fighting for their rights and cause. At that time only small organisations were independently working in the UK, but were not much help to the Refugees. The need for a joint collective effort in the form of a proper organisation to assist the Tamil Refugees was greatly felt by the Tamil community in the United Kingdom.

My friend Sathiyamoorthy and other members of various Tamil Charitable Organisations felt the need for a strong organisation which can play a positive role in helping the Tamil people by providing them not only assistance and guidance about this new country but also help them to settle here. The atmosphere and culture of the UK is completely different from the Tamil people therefore, the Refugees were having problems in settling in the UK. Arriving here as a Refugee was another battle for Tamils. They faced a number of problems such as language, housing, and employment.

The main idea behind the creation of TRAG was to set up an organisation for the refugees in the United Kingdom to be run by the refugees. Its purpose is to look after the interests of the Tamil community as a whole and since its birth it is doing so.

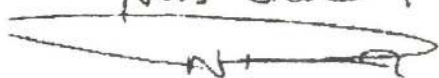
The first Committee members of TRAG were Rajes Bala, N. Ranjit, Fr. Elmo Ariyanayagam, S. Sathiyadas and K. Maheswaran. All were former refugees in the UK with the exception of Rajes Bala who had the political clout needed at that time. The TRAG first started its operation at 52 Acre Lane, London SW2 assisting refugees with Immigration and Welfare Benefit advice. The new arrivals were not fluent in English, the asylum and welfare benefits information was translated into Tamil and distributed free of charge.

With the passage of time, the number of Refugees grew and the need for accommodation became desperate. The founding members of TRAG formed a second organisation called Tamil Refugees (Action Group) Housing Association. The main purpose of this organisation was to assist the Tamil Refugees in finding homes. At that time the organisation assisted the GLC, London Borough Grants Scheme, the London Borough of Camden, London Borough of Haringey and London Borough of Islington.

In 1986 TRAG further spread its operation to provide free service in Immigration, Housing, Education and Welfare Benefits.

On the 1st April 1987 the non-profit making organisation Tamil Refugees Action Group became the Tamil Refugees Action Group Ltd and now provides services to its community in many different fields.

Yours Sincerely



N. RANJIT



Southwark Council

Councillor Eliza Mann

Liberal Democrat Member for
Riverside Ward

Members' Room, Southwark Town Hall,
Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

Tel: 07956 122394

E-mail: eliza.mann@southwark.gov.uk

Dear Chair, Committee members and Staff!

**The 20th anniversary of the establishment of
Tamil Refugee Action Group**

It is a great privilege as a former chair in sending my felicitation to TRAG on successful completion of twenty years of service to the Tamil refugee community in UK and delighted to have witnessed that TRAG has weathered all storm and stand firm today and committed to improve the services to the Tamil community. I am also very pleased that I had served TRAG about ten years as a committee member and as chair of this worthy organisation. It goes without saying that TRAG gave me the foundation to become a Local Government Councillor today and to serve wider community.

During this twenty years TRAG has achieved a great deal of service in immigration matters, educational advice, women welfare, health related problems as well as participated with stake holders events and maintained a good relationships with other organisations with similar objectives to serve the Tamil people.

I wish all the very best for TRAG to continue its services to achieve its objectives for many years to come and hope to join you all on 30th October 2005 for the celebration.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Eliza Mann

Chair of Scrutiny

Sub-Committee for Health and Social Care



The Chair
Tamil Refugee Action Group
*Greetings from London Borough
of Newham*



As a refugee arrived on 21st may and the first refugee who was in the management committee in 1985 when TRAG was set-up to meet the needs of the newly arrived in UK, I am pleased to send this message to the 20th anniversary celebrations. In 1985 UK was the first country ever in Europe or in the world appoints a worker to look after the interest of Tamil Refugees in UK, and I was the first out reach worker appointed at the British Refugee Council in Nov 1985 and funded by the Home Office. I am proud that I was the first refugee Founder Member of the Tamil Refugee Action Group Housing Association (now Tamil Community Housing Association). I was with Ken Livingston to open the 100th bed space at Lea in 1986.

The first management committee members were Ms.Rajesh Bala, Mr. N. Ranjithkumar, Mr. Thillai, Mr.Sathiamoorthy, Mr.Ravi Sundaralingam, Mr. Jason Emmanuel, Cllr.Clive Bootle, Mr. Roney Moodly and my self. The first meeting was held at 52 Acre Lane, Brixton. The volunteers Kanthan, Ariyaratnam, Bala, Naren, Saba and Sandy Buckan and many others joined on later stages. We had two offices Lantry Walk (refugee Council Hostel) and Acre Lane. Ranjith and me worked in both places looking after the asylum interviews at Lantry walk with the help of the UKIAS and the general office in Brixton. Later the Haringey and Islington Councils gave us accommodations. We used the Haringey Health Centre at Crouch End as our new office and we managed the properties at 95 & 104 Dukes Avenue and 116 Roseberry Avenue in Muswelhill also 4 flats in Islington. At this point several other Volunteers joined in including Maheswaran, Verni, Marry.

We were given grand by the then GLC to appoint the first paid workers to TRAG. I was in the appointment panel and we appointed Mr. Ranjithkumar as the first Co-ordinator. And Mr. Manoharan as administrator later we moved to our new office in Sevensister. Many people had an opportunity to work as a team and also gained employment in other places. The Politics, Personalities and Individuals egos created the problems and TRAG lost the Golden opportunity & Vision to deliver the service to the very vulnerable people but started to deliver the service based on funding criteria and Condition.

I wish the TRAG evaluate the past 20 years and their services, to improve the quality of service based on best value to meet the real community need. Today there are many organisations working in the country mainly in London for the benefit of Tamil Refugees but still there is huge gap on recognising or identifying the needs and helping the individuals with in the community. Protection and Settlement will be the two key area of work with the right strategy to reach the Vision.

TRAG failed in its mission to campaign the rights of Tamil Refugees also failed to represent them with in the International Law and UN Conventions in UK. I hope the management will take this as a serious issue in the future and make sure they protect the refugees with Human Rights with in the UK/European Law and play a lead role for their permanent settlement. Also I wish to see TRAG help only Immediate, Short and Medium term but not long term for the benefit of Integration. Also recognise the current situations and the needs of the next generation.

I take this opportunity to thank personally every one, past 20 years of management, staff and volunteers specially funders also individuals namely Mr. Ken Livingston mayor of London, Mr. Jeremy Corbin MP, Mr. Sandy Buckan (refugee action), Mr. Martin Baber (BRC), UKIAS, WUS, ARHAG, British Refugee Council (BRC), Haringey, Islington & Newham Councils who helped US with resources and many other ways to set-up an organisation to meet the needs when we arrived in 1985.
Congratulations and Best Wishes

Cllr.D. Paul Sathianesan



FIRST TEN YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

The influx of Tamils from Sri Lanka as refugees to the Western countries was hastened by the communal strife in the country taking a turn for the worse in 1983. Since Great Britain had its links with "Ceylon" for over a century considerable number of Tamil refugees entered U.K. as well. This sudden in-flow here made a handful of dedicated Tamil community workers to strive hard to meet the immediate needs of the refugees arriving here without any earthly possessions. The situation became uncontrollable after 1985 and the meagre resources available to the community workers was dissipating fast. As a result, individuals could not cope with the situation and a voluntary organisation was thought of as a replacement. This gave birth to the TAMIL REFUGEE ACTION GROUP IN 1985.

TRAG which started functioning with a part-time employee in Haringey in May 1985 paid by London Borough of Haringey concentrated its efforts initially to meet the basic needs of the newly arrived refugees helped by volunteers. Immigration, housing and welfare benefits were the priority areas at that time. Lack of other refugee organisations to help Tamils at the initial stages made the tasks undertaken by the organisation very arduous. The first Management Committee elected in 1985 with Ms. Rajes Bala as the Chairperson was able to cope with their tasks magnificently. They were ably assisted by volunteers. The appointment of the first Secretary/ Co-ordinator, who was a volunteer worker and a part-time Administrative support worker added strength to the skeletal staff already functioning and gave a formal appearance to the management structure of TRAG. Funding was made available for the part-time worker and to meet the rent of the office premises of TRAG by the London Borough of Camden.

Although the immigration, housing and welfare units were the priority areas in number of immigration and housing cases handled on a day-to-day basis, not only required the services of a Case worker to cope with the immigration case work load, but also a separate organisation to meet the housing need. This culminated in the establishment of the Tamil Refugee Housing Association in late 1986 to take over the housing function from TRAG, with its Co-ordinator as the first head of the Housing Association. He was replaced by another Co-ordinator who succeeded him in December 1986 funded by the London Boroughs Grants Unit. In the meantime the case work on immigration multiplied rapidly and it was found essential to appoint a Case worker. Accordingly a Case Worker was appointed in 1988 also funded by the LBGU.

In the late Eighties, the Management of TRAG realised the necessity to concentrate its action on refugee women and children, which was identified as a vulnerable group with urgent needs. It was also found that programmes had to be devised in the areas of education, training and employment to facilitate settlement of refugees.

The Women to Women Programme to cater to the needs of the refugee women and children was launched in 1990 with a full time Women welfare worker employed with grants received from the Baring Foundation, The City Parochial Foundation and the Tudor Trust. This programme since the time it was launched provided adequate service to women and children and as such has been expanded to include other initiatives in the field of employment for house bound women and care of the mentally ill. The appointment of the Women outreach worker in 1994 with funding from the City Parochial Foundation is facilitating the implementation of the initiatives to provide basic

skill and ESOL training to house bound women to enhance their employment and self-employment opportunities.

The increase in the proportion of youth and children in the refugee Tamil population who had fled Sri Lanka disrupting their education to escape harassment and persecution had made education, training and employment top priority areas. In addition, this group has also to be provided basic skill training in English. TRAG which handles cases in these areas found it hard to meet the growing needs of the group with the existing work load of immigration cases and case work in the other essential areas. This issue was resolved by forming the Tamil Refugee and Employment Centre in 1990. The staff of TRAG now only provides information / advice to this group and also does referrals.

1993 was a critical year for TRAG. The Immigration Appeals and Asylum Act which came into force this year, imposed many hardships on Asylum Seekers already living in this country. The provisions of this Act also made the entry of Tamils facing Human Rights Violation in Sri Lanka as Asylum Seekers into the U.K, very difficult. The implementation of this Act has also made immigration matters very technical and professional. As a result our officers handling immigration work had to seek legal assistance very often. This in turn had made their work load and work very complex and cumbersome. The year 1996 is envisaged to pose many issues and problems for the refugees and asylum seekers with regard to immigration. This was likely to complicate further the work of TRAG in this area.

The campaign agenda of TRAG, unlike in the initial stages had to be curtailed as soon as the organisation was registered as a charity in 1994. However, the organisation now campaigns in unison with other refugee organisations to spot light refugee issues within the limits of its objectives.

Our organisation which was founded to meet the basic needs of the Tamil refugee community has evolved to serve their needs according to the changing environment. The fact that its services are required even now illustrates the complex nature of the issues and problems facing the refugees and asylum seekers. TRAG will always adjust its programme of work to match the changing needs of the Tamil refugees.

We are hopeful and confident that those who have supported us during the past ten years, especially during our difficult times, will continue to support us. We very much appreciate their help and thank them profusely.

P.Sangaravel
Hon.Secretary
Tamil Refugee Action Group
11 September 1995.

வரலாற்றின் தேவை கருதி உருவான TRAG

ஒரு சிறிய தேசிய இனம் பெரும் தேசிய இனத்தால் ஒடுக்கு முறைக்கு உள்ளாகும் போது அதனை எதிர்த்து போராட வேண்டிய யதார்த்த சூழலுக்குள் தள்ளப்படுகின்றது. இவ்வாறான சூழலில் தான் தமிழ்த்தேசிய இனம் பெரும் தேசிய இனமான சிங்கள ஏகாதிபத்தியத்திற்கெதிராகப் போராட வேண்டி ஏற்பட்டது. ஆரம்பத்தில் அகிம்சைப்போராட்ட வடிவமெடுத்த எமது போராட்டம் எதிரியின் அடக்கு முறை அதிகரித்த நிலையில் அகிம்சைப்போராட்டம் தோல்வியடைய ஆயுத எழுச்சியாகப் பரிணமித்தது.

1948 முதல் 1970 கடைசிப்பகுதி வரை ஒடுக்கு முறையை எதிர்த்து அகிம்சைப்போராட்ட வடிவத்தில் போராடிய எமது தேசிய இனம் அகிம்சைப் போராட்டம் தோல்வியைத் தழுவிய காரணத்தினால் ஆயுதப்போராட்டத்தை இளைய தலைமுறை முன்னெடுத்தது. 1983இல் சிங்கள இராணுவத்தால் ஏற்பட்ட இனக்கலவரம் முதற்பதவையாக பெருமளவு மக்கள் தமது சொந்த நாட்டை விட்டு வெளிநாடுகளுக்கு அரசியல் தஞ்சம் கோரி செல்ல வேண்டி ஏற்பட்டது. எமது தேசியப்போராட்டம் வலுவடைந்த போது இதனை இராணுவ ரீதியாக முகம் கொடுக்க முடியாத சிங்கள இராணுவம் அப்பாவி மக்கள் மீது தனது ஆதிக்கத்தைக் கட்டவிழ்த்து விட்டது. இதன் ஒரு விளைவாக 1985ம் ஆண்டு பெருமளவு தமிழ் மக்கள் தமது நாட்டை விட்டு ஐரோப்பியா பிரித்தானிய நாடுகளுக்கு அரசியல் தஞ்சம் கோரி இடம் பெயர்ந்தனர்.

அக்கால கட்டத்தில் இங்கு அவ்வாறு வந்த மக்களின் அடிப்படைத் தேவைகளை கவனிப்பதற்கு அமைப்பு ரீதியாக Structure (கட்டுமானங்கள்) ஸ்தாபனங்கள் ஒன்றும் இருக்கவில்லை. ஏற்கனவே சிறிய அளவில் உதவிகள் செய்து வந்த சில நலன்விரும்பிகளும் கோயில் கிறிஸ்தவ ஆலயங்களுமே தற்காலிக உதவிகளை மனிதாபிமான ரீதியில் செய்தனர்.

வரலாற்றின் கடமையை உணர்ந்த தாயகத்தில் போராட்டத்தினை முன்னெடுத்து வந்த விடுதலை இயக்கம், தாயகத்தில் இருந்து அந்நிய மண் நோக்கி வந்த எமது மக்களுக்கு தேவையான அடிப்படை உதவிகளைச் செய்ய இந்நாட்டிலும் ஒரு அமைப்பை உருவாக்க முன்வந்தது. தாயகத்தில் இடம்பெயர்ந்த மக்களுக்காக அவர்களின் நலன்பேணும் அமைப்பாக தமிழர் புனர்வாழ்வுக்கழகம் உருவானது போன்று புலம்பெயர்ந்த மண்ணிலும் அரசியல் தஞ்சம் கோரி வந்தோருக்கு உதவிடும் அமைப்பாக தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழு என்ற அமைப்பை உருவாக்கியது.

1985 ஏப்பிரல் மாதத்தில் தமிழ் ஈழப்போராட்டத்தில் ஒரு திருப்பு முனை ஏற்பட்டது. ஈழத் தேசிய விடுதலை முன்னணி என்ற கட்டமைப்பு வரலாற்றின் தேவை நோக்கி உருவானது. இவ்வமைப்பில் ரெலோ, ஈ.பி.ஆர்.எல்.எப்., எல்.ரி.ரி.ஈ, ஈரோஸ் அமைப்புகள் ஒன்றிணைந்து செயற்பட்ட முன் வந்தன. தாயகத்தில் ஏற்பட்ட மாற்றம் பிரித்தானியாவிலும் உள்வாங்கி தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழுவின் அரசியல் யாப்பில் அவ்வமைப்புக் களையும் அங்கத்துவ அமைப்புகளாக முடிந்தது. இவ்வமைப்பைச் செயற்படுத்துவதற்கு தமிழர் தகவல் நடுவம், தமிழ் மகளிர் அமைப்பு போன்ற அமைப்புக்களும் தங்களுடைய உதவிகளைச் செய்ய முன்வந்தன.

அக்கால கட்டம் உலகில் பல்வேறு நாடுகளின் சிறிய தேசிய இனங்கள் ஒடுக்கு முறைக்கு எதிராகப் போராடிய காலகட்டம். ஆபிரிக்காவிலும் லெற்றின் அமெரிக்காவிலும் அவ்வாறான போராட்டங்கள் நடைபெற்றன. அந்த நாடுகளில் இருந்து அரசியல் தஞ்சம் கோரி பிரித்தானியாவிற்கு வந்த மக்கள் தம் நலன் பேண பல அமைப்புக்களை உருவாக்கி செயற்பட்டு வந்தனர்.

Africa(Arhag), Philippians, Latin American welfare போன்ற அமைப்புக்கள் தமது அனுபவங்களைப் பகிர்ந்து எமது அமைப்பை உருவாக்குவதில் முக்கிய பங்கை வகித்தனர். முன்வந்தன. 1985 June மாதப் பகுதியில் 42 Albany Street, London W1 இல் Refugee Forum இன் அனுசரணையுடன் நலன் விரும்பிகள் அனைவரையும் ஒன்று திரட்டி இங்கு அரசியல் தஞ்சம் கோரி வந்த மக்களின் அடிப்படைத் தேவைகளான குடியுரிமை, வீட்டு வசதி, மற்றும் வேலைவாய்ப்பு போன்றவற்றை செய்வதற்கு TRAG என்ற அமைப்பு உருவானது. இதற்கு மேல் குறிப்பிட்ட மற்றைய அமைப்புக்கள் தங்களின் அமைப்புக்களின் மாதிரி Models களை முன்வைத்து ஆலோசனைகளை வழங்கி உதவின. இந்நிறுவனம் இன்னும் பல தசாப்தங்கள் எந்தவித தடைகளும் இன்றித் தமிழ் மக்களுக்குச் சேவை செய்ய வேண்டுமென இறைவனை வேண்டுகின்றோம்.

க.சுகன்,
வேணி மகேஸ்வரன்

Tamil
Community
Housing
Association Ltd.



19th October 2005

Mr C Sithamparapillai
Chair – TRAG
2nd Floor, Suit 1 & 3
449/451 High Road
Willesden
London NW10 2JJ

Dear Mr Sithamparapillai,

It is with great sense of admiration I am sending felicitations to the highly acclaimed organisation, Tamil Refugee Action Group, popularly known as TRAG on reaching 20th year since inception. You have been rendering invaluable services to the Tamil Community, especially to the Tamil Refugees and destitute Asylum seekers, in the United Kingdom throughout these years.

TRAG is held in high esteem for the quality of its advice and guidance on numerous issues such as accommodation, financial support, education, immigration, health, medical and recreation. Your group's work in integration of various cultures, religions and languages achieved with the knowledge and expertise of the staff is well renowned.

TRAG has just turned an adult with twenty years of complete and excellent service to our Community. We are proud of our association with TRAG during the nine year period of our co-existence.

I, on behalf of our Board of Management, Staff and Shareholders of TCHA, congratulate your Board of Management and staff for your achievements and also wish that your Organisation will continue providing its services to the best of its ability to those who need, and assist in building a stronger Tamil Community.

Yours sincerely

S Arnold
Chair of the Board of Management
Tamil Community Housing Association.- TCHA



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Registered with the Housing Corporation (L4376) and under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965 with Charitable Status (25085R). Member of NHF.

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TR TEC

TR-TEC Message from the Chair

I feel privileged to send this message at this glorious and historic moment of TRAG. Exactly twenty years ago some energetic path finders, brimming with idealism in the course of providing timely assistance to the Tamil Community, fled from the war torn areas of Sri Lanka, decided to create an organisation, which is now known as TRAG (Tamil Refugee Action Group). TRAG is still standing tall like a tower inspiring and demonstrating to everyone, what community service and the services to the under privileged really does mean.

Although the Tamil Community in the United Kingdom has reasonably established and firmly set their roots, the service of TRAG is still being continues to the vulnerable and under privileged section of the Tamil Community. This particular commitment still continues to inspire and illuminates many of us. The TRAG leaves an indelible mark in the Tamil Community in the United Kingdom in moulding them to live in a society that was unheard to many of them in their lifetime. The TRAG had been instrumental for the birth of many sister organisation such Housing and TRTEC.

The Tamil Community living in the United Kingdom is greatly indebted to this organisation for its dedication in its attempt to provide initial assistance in respect of their basic needs when they were struggling to set foot in a country and also in a climate which was so alien to them. I could still recollect and remember the days when the Tamils did not have many legal firms run by Tamils in the United Kingdom, TRAG endeavoured to shoulder the responsibility of processing the asylum claims of Tamils in thousands and finding them the facilities of accommodation through other providers.

In the early stages of the struggle TRAG made immense representation and lobbying through many Parliamentarians at that time to the Government and various other organisations, which made them to recognise the ethnic issues in Sri Lanka and to take favourable and sympathetic views to the Tamil asylum seekers in the United Kingdom. This particular venture of TRAG has up-lifted the lives of so many Tamils in UK.

Being the Chairman of a Sister Institution of the TRAG I am openly admitting that the service of TRAG to the Tamil Community is immeasurable and every Tamil living in the United Kingdom is indebted to this organisation in one way or the other.

J.A.RAJAKARIAR
Chair

Tamil Refugee Training & Education Centre
is a Registered Charity No.: 1055149
& Company Limited by Guarantee No.: 3178738

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Alperton
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South London Centre
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Trident Business Centre
89 Bickersteth Road,
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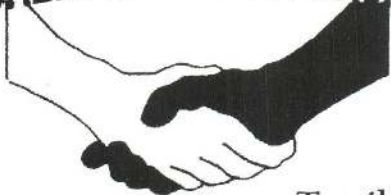
I have known the Tamil Refugee Action Group for a number of years going back to the early 1990,s when I was their Grants Officer at the London Borough Grants (LBG) and I remember well my visits to them at their offices in Kings Cross - to the present day when I have been working with them through the Evelyn Oldfield Unit, providing consultancy support.

It is a testament to the strength of this organisation that they have been providing a valuable service to the Tamil community for 20 years. I hope they go from strength to strength and provide another 20 years.

Best Wishes

John Micucki

BRENT REFUGEE FORUM



Brent Refugee Forum
Suite 3, Moran House
449 - 451 High Road
Willesden, London, NW10 2J

020 8459 9092

Tamil Refugee Action Group (TRAG) 20th Anniversary Celebration, 1985 - 2005

"The Brent Refugee Forum has been an effective umbrella body for bringing the Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) and the Service Providers together to share information, experiences and inform decision making bodies of the refugee sector needs.

The Forum has also been responsible for the development of the capacity of the RCOs and undertook an advocacy approach to improve the quality of life of refugees and asylum seekers in Brent.

The Tamil Refugee Action Group was known to the Forum since its establishment in 1998.

It is good to see this organization survive and expand over 20 years of hard work, which benefits the Tamil community in UK. The model of their work is an example of the good practice to be learnt from.

Recently the Forum has been working in an important issue, the increased prevalence of Tuberculosis. Over the last 25 years, high number of TB infection have been reported in Brent, to the extent that Brent has been described as "TB Capital of Europe". Notification rates TB among most ethnic groups in Brent is higher than National rates.

The meaning of TB can be deeply damaging to community identity and individual statuses within their communities. Understanding of these issues will help guide education around the condition, which is specific to the needs and sensitivities of each group.

The Forum undertook the most appropriate approach working with the different refugee communities.

The Tamil Refugee Action Group is one of the 10 other community groups which contributed to the success of this project. Valuable information and personal experiences were shared. This helped explore the level of knowledge, and community attitude and perception of Tuberculosis, which is

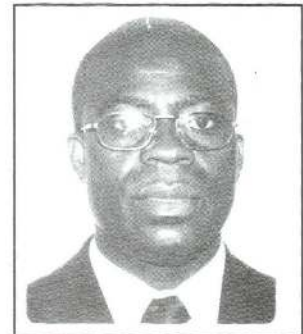
vital to inform the Health Service Providers of the needs the barriers and gaps in service provision.

This Research may open up venues to explore the influence of the social understanding of TB on the uptake of treatment and service provision and therefore help eliminate health inequality in Brent.

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Tamil community and their organization for the efforts they make to improve the quality of life, not only for the Tamil community, but for the residents of Brent.

The Tamil Refugee Action Group's 20th Anniversary is strong evidence of the success and the importance of the RCOs as such to facilitate refugee integration"

Jefferson Kwamina-Crystal
Chair, Board of Directors
Brent Refugee Forum



Children Holiday Projects



Tamil Refugee Action Group: Twenty Visible Years Serving The Tamil Community in West London

I am pleased to be associated with the 20th Anniversary of the Tamil Refugee Action Group (TRAG).

TRAG has been a visible a presence in West London and one of Tamil community organisations that has championed the cause of Tamils across the sub-region. I have had the opportunity to be a guest in some of the organisation's health workshops and seminars that have alighted the TRAG's great achievements to date.

In Harrow, the Tamils are a vibrant, dynamic and a very entrepreneurial community. Their visible presence in South Harrow and Rayners Lane greatly reflects the dynamism of this strong community. In Northolt Road, South Harrow and Rayners Lane, the Tamils have almost changed the way we shop for groceries. And if you don't fancy cooking you have a choice of spending the evening at the Tamil Brasserie.

I'm also indebted to the Tamil Refugee Action Group for its support as a member of The Harrow Refugee Forum - an umbrella organisation for refugees and minority ethnic communities - through an on going presence at the Forum's events and activities.

I sincerely wish TRAG's continued success in its endeavours and hope that all of us could emulate its success.

Happy Anniversary!

Alex da Costa
Chair,
The Harrow Refugee Forum



Tamil Refugee Action Group

I am a single-handed GP working in Southall for more than 10 years. Majority of my patients are Tamil immigrants, refugees. TRAG is an organization committed to serve the Tamil people moved to a foreign land with unknown people with different language culture, housing hospital school facilities and employment. It is working with the present problems of uprooting and planting in a different soil with different environmental factors and the future problems that will be created due to change in life style, diet & lack of exercise, stress etc.

My personnel knowledge about TRAG is mainly related to health matters. The most important is the health promotion. It has held several seminars, meetings, in & around Southall, Ealing, and Harrow in which I have involved or attended. Speakers were well qualified and English speeches were interpreted well in to Tamil so that every Tamil person attended was able to understand what was said. The meetings were very informative and covered the rising medical illnesses among Tamil people and how to prevent them.

The people & health professional are appreciating TRAG for providing various health information leaflets in Tamil. I find it very useful for my patients and help my staff and me to manage them better. Also my patients are becoming more knowledgeable and health conscious. One of the Ealing PCT staff mentioned to me in one of the meetings that health promotion and health awareness among Tamils is much greater than in any other immigrant population. TRAG has also helped my staff and patient by providing practice management leaflets in Tamil.

The TRAG officers are very helpful friendly. I am very pleased to see the TRAG has expanded the services from NW London to North London and now to East London. I wish all my best wishes & successful future for the organization

Dr Mala Radhakrishnan

Message from a G.P

It has been a great pleasure and honour to be associated with TRAG. As a popular practice with a list of about 7500, more than 90% of our patients are Sri Lankan Tamils. It was a struggle to see everyone who wanted an appointment and practically impossible to give health education to the ones who did not know English. In addition, patients used to make appointments to see me to translate and explain letters they have received in English.

I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Kadir during 2000 and when he mentioned about TRAG and his plan to organise health education meetings in Tamil, I felt it was a splendid idea. As I was the first GP to get involved in this project, I agreed for a talk about Diabetes, its complications and its management. The meeting took place on 18th March 2000. As it was the first meeting to be organised by TRAG, only about 20 people attended. With time, more Tamil Health Professionals and Professors got involved with the project and the number of attendees increased to more than 100 during these meetings.

TRAG was supplying us with leaflets and posters about diseases, healthy eating and other health related issues. We always encourage our patients to attend the TRAG meetings. They learn things from other health professionals and it also gives them an opportunity to meet and discuss similar health related problems with fellow countrymen. The feed back from my patients about these meetings have always been positive. TRAG has been guiding the Tamils towards Immigration and Asylum problems, appropriate employment opportunities, housing claims and other general inquiries. Invariably I used to give the TRAG contact number to my Tamil patients who were faced with these problems.

I hope TRAG will continue to grow encompassing all the needs of the Tamil refugees and change its focus as needed for the welfare of the people it serves. I have nothing but praise to the TRAG and especially Dr Kadir for his contribution as a health promotion worker and the strong links he has established with Tamil speaking GPs.

I wish TRAG many more anniversaries.

Dr V Chandran
GP in Kingsbury,
London NW9

உயர்ந்த சேவை ஆற்றும் தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழு பிரித்தானியாவில்

ஸ்ரீலங்காவில் தமிழ் இன ஒழிப்பாக எடுக்கப்பட்ட கலவரம் பாரிய யுத்த நடவடிக்கையினால் பாதிக்கப் பட்ட பல தமிழர் தமது உயிரைக் காக்கும் விதமாக உலகின் பல பாகங்களுக்கு அகதிகளாகி இடம் பெயர்ந்தனர். பிரித்தானியாவிலும் தஞ்சமடைந்தனர். தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழு அமைப்பின் மூலமாக பிரித்தானிய அரசின் உதவியுடன் அன்றும் இன்றும் சேவை செய்து 20வது அகவை அடைந்துள்ளது. பெருமைக்குரியது பாராட்டுக்குரியது. நற்பணி செய்வீர்களாக.

முக்கியமாக தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழு என்ற அமைப்பில் முதன் முதலில் ஆரம்பித்து செயற்பட்டவர்களுக்கும் அவர்களின் வழியில் நிறைகுடம் போல் தளம்பாது பாதுகாத்து வந்த நிர்வாக சபையினரையும் சேவை நலனாக செயற்பட்ட சகல ஊழியர்களுக்கும் தமது சிறந்த செயற்பாட்டை நிரூபித்து உள்ளனர். அனைவரையும் நாம் பாராட்ட வேண்டும். தமிழ் மக்களின் நலனுக்காக இந்த அமைப்பை போல் பலவற்றை உருவாக்குதலுக்கு ஊக்கமளித்த சமாதானப் பிரியரான சதா. கிருஷ்ணகுமாரின் செயலாகும். 1985 தொடக்கம் இன்றுவரை தமிழருக்கு உதவும் சில அமைப்புக்களே செய்து வருகின்றன.

பிரித்தானியாவில் அகதிகளின் வருகை சகல வழிகளையும் மூடப்பட்டதும் ஸ்ரீலங்கா வில் தமிழர்களுக்கு ஆபத்து இல்லை என யாழ்ப்பாணத்திலிருந்து மக்களிடம் பெறப்பட்ட தகவலின் படி ஐரோப்பிய ஒன்றிய குழு ஸ்ரீலங்கா பாதுகாப்பானது என தமிழ் அகதிகளை ஏற்க பிரித்தானியாவில் மறுக்கப்பட்டது. சிங்களப் படைகளுடன் தமிழர் யாழ்ப்பாணம் மற்றும் ஏனைய பகுதிகளில் சுமுகமாக வாழ்கின்றார்கள் என்று கொடுக்கப்பட்ட தகவல் சிங்கள ஆங்கில படையின் மத்தியில் வாழும் மக்கள் தமது சொந்த கருத்துக்களை பகிரங்கமாக வெளியிட முடியாது என்பதை புலம் பெயர்நாட்டு தமிழர் அமைப்புக்களின் கடமையை செய்ய வேண்டும். அகதிகள் அமைப்பின் அங்கத்தவரின் தமிழ் மக்களின் சார்பில் திரு.சா. ஸ்ரீனிவாஸ்(SLTWG) அவர்கள் பிரித்தானியா அரசிற்கு எடுத்துக் கூறிய வண்ணம் உள்ளார்.

தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழுவின் மூலமாக அகதியாக தஞ்சமடையும் பல எம் தமிழ் வரவுகளுக்கு உடனடித்தேவைகள் இருப்பிட வசதி சுகாதார சேவை செவிப்புலனற்ற வர்களுக்கான சேவை இ மனநோயாளருக்கான பராமரிப்பு ஆலோசனை குடும்ப இணைவு ஆங்கில கல்வி போதனை பிள்ளைகளினால் பராமரிக்காது கைவிடப்பட்டவர்களுக்கான வீடு வசதி முதியோருக் கான ஒன்றுகூடல் மனஆறுதலுக்கான சுற்றுலா வசதிகளை எம்மக்களுக்காக சேவையாற்றும் பணியகமாகும்.

தற்போது அகதிகள் வருகை இல்லாது இருந்தாலும் பிரித்தானியாவில் வசிக்கும் தமிழ் மக்களின் நலனுக்காக செயல்படுவதுபாராட்டத்தக்கதாகும். பல புது சேவைகள் ஆரம்பிக்கப்பட வேண்டும். பல வருட கால செவிப்புலனற்றவர்களுடன் தொண்டனாக செயல்பட்டவன் அகதியான அடியேன் கால-காலமாக பிரித்தானிய மந்திரிகள் மேயர்கள் பல மருத்துவ நிபுணர்களின் இவ் அமைப்பின் வேண்டுகோளை ஏற்று வருகை தந்து தமிழ் மக்களின் நலனுக்காக ஆதரவு கொடுத்த அனைவரையும் பாராட்டுகின்றேன்.

"மக்கள் சேவை மகேசன் சேவை"

"தமிழ் சமுதாயம் சீரழியாது காக்கப்பட வேண்டும்"

அன்புடன்

ஐ.அ. சிவானந்தம்.

Message from Miss. Rangah Balasubramaniam
Medical Student - Volunteer TRAG

It is with great pleasure that I give this message on the special occasion of the 20th anniversary celebration of the Tamil Refugee Action Group.

I was associated with TRAG for the past several years, initially as a service user and later as a health promotion volunteer. As a volunteer, I have met hundreds of clients who were benefited from the services provided by TRAG, such as asylum and immigration, housing and welfare, health promotion, women welfare etc. We as volunteers got involved in organising several health seminars, immigration and asylum seminars and cultural events which were all successful and participated not only by Tamil community but members of other community as well.

As a health promotion volunteer, I am delighted with the health education, advice and support services offered to refugees and asylum seekers by TRAG. Health seminars organised by TRAG with the participation of expert medical personnels such as professors, consultants, GPs and other health professionals, and the large number of health promotion leaflets produced by TRAG in Tamil, have raised the image of TRAG to a national level.

I should not forget to thank the Chair, executive committee members and staff for their continued effort in maintaining this organisation for the satisfaction of our community and I will continue to give my support to TRAG as a volunteer for many more years.

I wish TRAG all success in this celebration.

Miss. Rangah Balasubramaniam



Mr.Lawrence Arul - A Volunteer with a difference



Mr Lawrance Arul (40years) is a Deaf person who came to this country from Sri Lanka as an asylum seeker with his parents, brothers and sisters at the age of five. He was educated up to A/Level. Thereafter he continued studies at the University of Port Mouth for Deaf and educated in Electronics, Maths, Woodwork, sports, Health & Safety, Computer etc

Also obtained British Sign Language – Level 4

He was associated with TRAG for the past 18 years as a Volunteer. He is an active Volunteer and was seen at every meeting and seminar organised by the Tamil community throughout London.

No events were held by TRAG without Arul's participation. He is the chief organiser for our Tamil Youths Deaf club which is held once a month at our Drop in centre. The directors, staff and other Volunteers of TRAG are very happy and pleased with his active participation and the enormous support he gave to our community events. He is being respected by all sections of our community.

We like to express our deep appreciation of the excellent work done by him to our community and wish him good luck.

Kathir
H.P.W

TAMIL REFUGEE ACTION GROUP

ORIGIN - IT'S PAST HISTORY

The origins of Tamil Refugee Action Group can be traced to the struggle of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka for an identity as a nation seeking refuge abroad. Its growth and progress and its survival over the years, is in large measure due to collaboration, consultation and coordination between mainstream Britain and all sectors of the refugee community, irrespective of class, status or power issues.

Tamils of Sri Lanka have progressively seen their rights eroded over many years causing them to seek refugee abroad. Until April 1985, there were 2200 Tamil refugees who sought refugee in Britain from Sri Lanka, whilst as many as 45,000 Tamils fled to Western European countries and over 125,000 to India, to escape brutal repression in Tamil homelands in Sri Lanka.

A handful of Tamil voluntary organisations, church groups and Refugee organisations in Britain, were able to provide the bare necessities of food and shelter to the refugees, out of their meagre resources. These refugees stayed in over crowded situations, sleeping in Temple floors, community halls, reception centres and bed and breakfast hostels.

Notwithstanding, there was both political and U.K. governmental pressure to stem the tide of Tamil refugee arrivals. To calm internal fears, many were wantonly classed as "economic migrants," and unjustifiably deported. With the sudden influx of nearly 600 Tamils arriving in Britain in May 1985, claiming political asylum, due to the pogrom of atrocities in Sri Lanka, the need arose to formalise the existing piecemeal arrangements.

This emergency lead to the immediate necessity to form a legal entity, not only to provide shelter and sustenance, but also campaign for the rights of Tamil refugees in Britain. Many refugees fled Sri Lanka, to escape State and other forms of terror. A diversity and variety of wants and needs had to be catered for, both sensitively and with strict confidentiality. This could not be provided by existing functionaries.

TRAG FORMATION

TRAG was formed as a Company limited by guarantee in May 1985, by a group of concerned individuals, both Tamil and British, in London, in the wake of the horrendous massacres of April and May 1985. Until this time, the number of refugee arrivals was contained within Tamil homes of friends and family, churches, temples and asylum shelters.

BRITISH SUPPORT

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, M.P for Islington North, having recently returned from a visit to Sri Lanka, writing in the Annual Report of TRAG, on 10 April 1987 stated:

"During 1984 and early 1985 the British press and media were very quiet about the situation developing in Sri Lanka. In fact, the major news item was the visit by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, to the opening of the Victoria Dam, the beauty of Sri Lanka and good Government relations. There was no coverage of the conflict or the plight of the Tamils in the North and East of the island. This picture went unchallenged in the British press. Questions were asked in Parliament but there was no organised protest by the Tamil community.

Soon after, the Home Office began making statements about the number of refugees arriving in UK which resulted in press headlines about "Floods of Tamil Refugees". It was at this time that the Minister of State Home Office announced a change in the procedures for Members of Parliament seeking to help refugees. MP's were still able to delay the removal of a refugee so that their case could be heard, but full details of the case had to be sent in writing to the Minister within 24 hours.

This coincided with the arrival of a very large group of Tamils and the Parliamentary recess. The Minister's action was an undisguised attempt to stop Members of Parliament "interfering" with the return of refugees to Sri Lanka. Thanks to the tireless work of United Kingdom Immigration Advisory Service (UKIAS) and a small number of MPs and their assistants, no Tamil was returned as a result of this decision. When Parliament returned, the decision was hotly contested. The 24- hour time limit was extended to a more reasonable period of 12 days."

British Parliamentarians support

The media spotlighted the Tamil issue and focussed attention on the methods of immigration interview, interrogation, detention and deportation. A group of British Parliamentarians in the constituencies of Tamil resettlement in U.K. were exceedingly concerned for the rights and welfare of the Tamil people, both in this country and abroad. They tried to secure a fair hearing in UK for Tamil asylum seekers. Together with TRAG, they tried to fight to defend the rights of the Tamil people - and the rights of refugees from all countries..

Members of Parliament helped, assisted, guided and advised Tamil refugees in their struggle for asylum over the years. Many were committed in helping TRAG in its early formation, without which little would have been achieved. Some, in fact volunteered in

validating the registration of TRAG. To list the variety and type of assistance of British MPs would be hardly possible. However, we list some names of the MPs below:

Rt.Hon. Tony Benn (Labour M.P. Chesterfield); Rt Hon. Clare Short (Lab. Birmingham Ladywood); Ken Livingstone (Former Leader of the G.L.C., Lab. M.P. Brent East, now Mayor of London); Late Bernie Grant (Former Leader, Haringey Council, former Lab. M.P. Tottenham); Jeremy Corbyn (Lab. M.P. Islington North); Rt.Hon. Chris Smith (Lab. M.P. Islington South & Finsbury); Terry Fields (former Lab.M.P. Broadgreen); Jo Richardson (former Lab. M.P. Barking); Tom Cox (former Lab. M.P. Tooting); Neil Gerard (Lab.M.P. Walthamstow); Mike Gapes (Lab. M.P. Ilford South); Rt.Hon. Stephen Timms (Lab. Newham North East); Tony Banks (Lab. Newham North West); Harry Cohen (Lab. Leyton); The Late Sir Robert McCrindle (former Conservative. M.P. Brentwood & Ongar) Dr. Ian Twinn (former Con. M.P. Edmonton); Neil Thorne (former Con. M.P. Ilford South); Simon Hughes (Lib.Dem, M.P. Southwark & Bermondsey) Dafydd Wigley (former Plaid Cymru, M.P. Caernarfon) to include a few - all volunteered support, to overcome a number of political hurdles.

Besides, there was also no shortage of support and sympathy from many members of the House of Lords and eminent members of the Religious, Academic, and Legal, professions for TRAG's campaign for justice and fairplay for Tamils. Baroness Williams of Crosby; Baroness Tonge; Lords Astor; Avebury; Ashcroft; Kinnock; Healey; Dubs and Harris of Harringey, among others gave their support.

Mr. Robert Evans, (Lab) Member, European Parliament made several visits to the Tamil homeland of North East Sri Lanka, whilst Dr. Liam Fox (Con. M.P. Woodspring) also visited Sri Lanka to assess the Tamil struggle as the Conservative spokesperson.

At first MPs helped in staying deportation orders of genuine Tamil asylum seekers, pleading their cases with H.M. Immigration and Home Office officials, whilst Viscount David Astor (Con.) and Lord Avebury (Lib,) raised the issue of Tamil refugees in the House of Lords. Many Tamils being detained for lack of an address acceptable to H.M. Immigration would not have been released, if not for the concerted effort of British Parliamentarians.

British Public support

With stringent immigration controls of Tamils arriving as asylum seekers, public opinion and attention swayed in sympathy of these refugees and government policy was again under intense scrutiny by the media. This facilitated TRAG campaign.

In fact, the formation of TRAG would not have been completed without the active participation of the host advisors. Ms. Stephanie d'Orey of London (Boroughs) Strategic Policy Unit -Race Equality Policy Group; Ms. Mary Dines; Ms.Liz Philippson; Ms.Maureen Connolly; Late Ms.Barbara Melunski (London Borough Grants Unit); Ms.Anne Owers (JCWI); and Dr.Martin Barber (British Refugee Council).Mr.Sandy Buchan, Refugee Action; Mr.Ronnie Moodley, Chair Refugee Forum & Later ARHAG; Mr.Mark Lucas Haringey Council, the latter persons took a keen interest in attending the early management committee meetings of TRAG. Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab. Former Leader Haringey Council and recently of Greater London Police Authority); Dr Martin Barber and Lord Dubs (lately of British Refugee Council), were also a tower of strength, setting up management training workshops for TRAG in its early development.

TRAG COMPOSITION

Besides personalities, the first Management Committee of TRAG incorporated Tamil organisations in UK, each with its own representative on the Committee. These organisations jointly participated for the first time in a foreign land, with the purpose of facilitating assistance to all Tamil refugees, who came to UK as part of the struggle for freedom.

TRAG came to serve a wide spectrum of clientele who relied on its asylum support role in confidence and no effort was spared to assist them, within the limited resources at its disposal. Despite the atrocities committed, whether they were due to State terror, or committed by various factions aligned to the State, there was strict adherence to need and neutrality. Impartiality in service delivery was the hallmark of TRAG.

This independent role of TRAG from inception, whether it was reality or perception, is not at issue here. The active role taken by the above named British activists participating as full Committee members, helped to inculcate and imprint impartial service as part of the criteria of service provision, redressing any inherent grievances or hidden agenda. As time passed in 1998, TRAG accepted a new Constitution with charity status and its compliance. This changed the role played by organisations within TRAG, but did not dent its independence or impartiality.

In addition, TRAG's impartiality was in fact guaranteed, by the prudent advice and association of two Law firms, Winstanley & Burgess and Jane Coker, Solicitors. TRAG through them sought the best legal opinion in Britain to contest matters in appeal jurisdiction, for any Tamil refugee, irrespective of bias. This preserve has stood the test of time over the many years.

MODULE OF SERVICE

As a Limited Company by Guarantee, TRAG could offer a wide spectrum of service. At commencement, the needs of the day required not only asylum and legal representation, but also a range other services to refugees, which were not instituted. These included provision of housing, education and welfare facilities, and most important to act as campaign agency by raising consciousness of the conditions which resulted in Tamil people becoming refugees in the first place. This required political and social liaison with other partner refugee organisations and politicians. There was no shortage of mainstream support for TRAG and its activities by this time



TRAG Opening Ceremony in Walthamstow



TRAG Opening Ceremony in Walthamstow

TAMIL COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION - a brief History

Whilst TRAG was increasingly concerned with immigration and welfare during its early development, there grew out this awareness a dire need for housing the dispossessed refugees from Sri Lanka.

Tamil Refugee Housing Association (TRHA) was born of TRAG on 6 January 1986 and registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1985 (R25085) to cater solely for the housing, care and support needs of the Tamil refugees.

Efforts to end the war and restore peace in Sri Lanka meant the number of refugees coming to the UK was reduced, but TRHA continued to provide homes and a future to the many who were in need.

At first TRHA was offered short life properties and hostels by the London Boroughs of Haringey and Islington and later by the larger Housing Associations like, London & Quadrant and Hyde Housing.

This partnership between the Councils, Housing Associations and TRHA grew. Although the accommodation was not good standard, the Councils offered help to do the necessary repairs, whilst the refugees in these houses helped in painting, wallpapering, carpeting and decorating to make it acceptable. Local people and neighbours provided the furniture, cooking equipment and other necessities to these Tamils.

In 1997 TRHA was re-launched as Tamil Community Housing Association Ltd., to accurately reflect the client group TCHA was serving, that of the wider Tamil community besides refugees.

Since re-launch, TCHA has developed as a partner Housing Association working with the larger Housing Associations both in London and since dispersal of refugees, at Birmingham.

TCHA provides quality homes to primarily the Tamil community but also the wider ethnic refugee community. Successful continued partnerships have been forged with a range of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Councils and other organisations in delivering quality services to its client group, illustrating TCHA's commitment and professional approach.

After careful preparation and a tremendous amount of effort by all connected with TCHA, the year 2003 saw TCHA as a Developer registered with the Housing Corporation.

TCHA has completed nineteen years of relentless service to the community.

CHRONICLE OF TRAG

1984

- First wave of Tamil migrants seeking asylum in U.K.
- Composition mainly professionals, family unions, limited sponsorship and less well off individuals fleeing hostilities in Sri Lanka
- No concerted community campaign
- No Seminars
- Research monograph on "Treatment of Asylum Seekers by Home Office"
Produced by Latchmere Project - Richmond Citizens Advice (CAB) and resourced by Tamil Information Centre (TIC)
- Little media and Press coverage
- Conditions of health of refugee arrivals causing concern. Many asylum seekers traversing through many country transits enroute by air.
- Very few women arriving in U.K.
- Social service provision cared for by British Refugee Council, Church and Temple volunteers
- British Volunteers acting as Detention Centre Visitors
- Refugees forced to sign on regularly at Police Stations
- Family and friends provide housing, besides majority accommodated in Temples and church halls.

1985

- Home Office imposes Visa restriction first on Tamils of Sri Lanka on 29 May 1985 and then on most of the other Commonwealth Nationals with the exception of few nationals.
- * Tamil Refugee Action Group formed on 30 May 1985
- Registered by a group of volunteer workers as a Company Limited under Guarantee to cater for the immediate needs of asylum seekers and refugee arrivals.
- Volunteers both British and Tamil organisations join in Management Committee
- Soaring of refusal of asylum applications of Tamil refugees
- Campaigns launched to help asylum seekers
- Intervention in obtaining benefits, such as social security, temporary housing, schooling and education services for asylum seekers
- Organised visits to Detention Centre at Latchmere House, Richmond, Surrey
- Majority of arrivals young males, many unable to communicate in English.
- Difficulty in obtaining employment opportunities
- Seminars and Conferences participated by TRAG:
 1. GLC Conference on Migrants and Refugees
 2. Refugee Seminar at Bristol University
 3. City College, London Seminar - "How Western media looks at Black Peoples and Third World Issues".

4. BBC "Open Space "programme on British Refugee and Immigration rules and regulations
 5. British Refugee Council Exhibitions on "Refugee Communities."
- Publications by TRAG:
 1. "Legal Status of Refugees," published in Tamil
 2. "Plight of Tamil Refugees," published in English
 - Referral of Victims of Torture to Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, given priority by TRAG.
 - TRAG Volunteers register refugees with medical services and GPs.
 - TRAG shares office at 9 Langtry Walk, Swiss Cottage, London NW4
 - TRAG accepts office space at the Refugee Forum 42 Albany Street London NW1

1986

- First Office of TRAG at 62 West Green Road, London N15, during spring 1986, officially opened by Mayor of Haringey, 2 August 1986.
- Difficulty of setting up office administration, effective and confidential filing and communication system, with a part-time employee funded by LB Camden
- Vulnerable refugees exploited as cheap labour, isolated & alienated from community
- Prolonged detention of Tamils for periods over a year in some cases, in Detention Centres, TRAG organised 24 hour vigil on 26 July 1986 at the Home Office
- Use of Prison Ship, which almost sank during hurricane on 17 October 1986
- Growing harshness of port procedures, Tamils brutally forced on planes on repatriation
- TRAG volunteers develop a network of other refugee groups, lawyers and agencies to coordinate efforts, share information and organise campaign
- Promoted the incorporation of a branch organisation to deal with homelessness.
- Tamil Refugee (Action Group) Housing Association Ltd formed
- British Refugee Council conducts workshops for volunteer workers of TRAG
- Seminar - Anti Deportation Conference at Haringey Council
- Publications: 1. "Advice for Persons with Six Months ELR in UK" in Tamil
2. "Legal Status of Refugees "in Tamil -Re-edition
- * More anti Tamil media slant received attention of MPs who raise issue of treatment of Tamils in Parliament
- Public sympathy aroused
- Full time Coordinator of TRAG funded by LBGS appointed December 1986.

1987

- Home Office tries to remove 58 Tamil refugees on 17 February, without appeal or the normal operating referral system, lobby outside Home Office on 19 February '87
- Timely support of UKIAS, together with TRAG campaign, deportation stopped

- Press Conferences on Deportation held at offices of Terry Field MP, in January 1987, later on 20 February with the help of Jeremy Corbyn at his office House of Commons
- Various letter writing campaigns to highlight refugee problems
- Lobby with JCWI at House of Commons on 16 March 1987
- Protest March on 6 June 1987 to highlight "Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka"
- Promoted the incorporation of a branch organisation to deal with homelessness.
- Tamil Refugee (Action Group) Housing Association Ltd formed
- Work of TRAG expands as it gets better known and provides a better service with help from ARHAG in housing refugees
- TRAG gave 28 interviews to the media and TV and arranged 10 individual interviews between Tamil refugees and the media
- Public Meeting at Conway Hall, London WC1 on 16 August '88 inviting British public to participate to explain hardships of Tamil refugees

1988

- Seminar "Tamils -The Right to Live" at North Middlesex Polytechnic on 27 February '88
- Representations to MPs made systematically to raise awareness in and out of Parliament irrespective of Party politics
- Publications:
 1. "Post Accord Killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka"
 2. "Tamil Refugee Review" -bilingual monthly periodical
- Production support for Channel 4 Barefoot Video film :
"Refugees entitled to Exceptional Leave to Remain"
- TRAG offers regular Interpreter support
- Tamil social evening at Edmonton 17 January 1988
- Assisted British Refugee Council in preparation of Report for "Age in Exile"
Conference held in Netherlands 25-27 November 1988

1989

- TRAG pays special attention to rebuilding the image of Tamil refugees as a united community and entity with a common purpose, to touch every Tamil in one way or other
- TRAG participates in "Reality of Being a Refugee in UK" - 19 May 1989
- Submitted Memorandum on "UNHCR Public Information Policy on Sri Lanka" to Asia Committee, British Refugee Council on 12 December 1989
- TRAG contributes in production of Channel 4 TV Programme and Research Study :
"Refugee Studies Programme at University of Oxford"
- Published Report on:" Tamil Refugees in Waltham Forest -Need for Recognition, Protection and Resettlement."

1990

- TRAG organised "Thai Pongal" Harvest Festival ,Lola Jones Hall, London SW17 on 14 January 1990
- TRAG participates at Conference "Refugees -The Struggle for Equality," at Westminster Central Hall, Storeys Gate London SW1 on 30 January 1990
- Women Welfare Worker post established - successful training courses and social gatherings for women introduced and Play School for Children initiated by TRAG
- Counselling Service with the services of a Medical Practitioner attending bi- weekly
- TRAG moves Office for third time to 3rd Floor,335/337 Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London WC1
- TRAG promotes the establishment of TR-TECH for training in Information Technology and the Teaching of the Spoken English.

1991

- There was continued deterioration in the Rights of the Refugee in the UK,
- An increasing number of measures adopted by Immigration Authorities, to make it difficult for people to seek refuge or asylum in UK
- TRAG mounts campaign with other Refugee Organisations following information as to the imposition of New Restrictions on Asylum Seekers and Refugees.
- TRAG is represented at several preparatory sessions in June 1990 organised by BRC, JCWI, Refugee Working Party and Haringey Refugee Forum
- Liaised with the Media to highlight this unwelcome move by the Home Office
- Obtain concessions in the provisions of the Asylum Bill before Parliament, drawing attention to the safeguards for Human Rights of those seeking asylum. And to seek justice for refugees.

1992

- TRAG draws attention of Home Office to the distinction between "escape from persecution" and "seeking asylum," in UK
- Although number of Tamil asylum applications has increased, the proportion of those being granted refugee status has significantly decreased
- TRAG jointly with TRHA and TR-TEC organised Thai Pongal Festival at Graveney School Hall, Tooting in January 1992
- Woman to Woman Programme proves successful to redress real issues of protection, care and welfare of Tamil women and children
- Over 16,000 Tamils applied for asylum in UK until end October 1992, of which 8671 were granted Exceptional Leave to Remain and 119 refugees given full refugee status.

CHRONICLE OF TRAG - LEGAL ASPECTS

1993 - Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 came into force on 26 July '93

- Applied to any decision made after this date. Severe impact on all the applications for asylum including those of the Tamil asylum seekers.
- Faster than the so called "Fast Track" Certificate by the Secretary of State, but the application is without foundation.
- However due to judicial successful challenges, the Secretary of State withdraws such Certificates in respect of Sri Lankan Tamils.
- Services continue in the areas of Immigration, Housing, Education, and Employment and Training, Welfare rights, Women to Women Programme, Mental Health.
- Application made to the Charity Commission to obtain charity status.

1994

- Home Office in April / May withdraws its blanket policy of granting Exceptional Leave to Remain [ELR] to Sri Lankan Tamils. Each case is to be determined on its own merits.
- Immigration Rules 1994 come into force on 1 October 1994 imposing further restrictions on the rights of the refugees.
- Applications required to be made forthwith; destroying or damaging travel documents adversely affects claim.
- internal flight alternative; safe parts in the country (Colombo).
- Applications already made or travelling through Third safe Country etc.
- TRAG in March 1994 becomes a registered charity.
- Type of services the same as 1993.

1995

- Further changes regarding Asylum applications.
- The effect of the implementation of the Immigration Appeals Act 1993, many Sri Lankan Tamil asylum applications refused, resulting in increased work load.
- Appeals to the Special Adjudicators.
- Woman Outreach Worker appointed in January 1995.
- Type of activities continues the same as before.

1996

- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 comes into force in February 1996.
- This brought in more restrictions in respect of asylum applications as more and more people were refused asylum by the Home Office.
- Decisions had to be challenged by way of Appeal to the Special Adjudicators.
- TRAG continues to receive funding from London Borough Grants Unit, London Borough of Camden, Tudor Trust and City Parochial Foundation.
- Type of services provided is almost similar to the last year.

1997

- Severe difficulties and hardships caused to Asylum Seekers.
- TRAG makes representations to the Home Office on 14 November 1997.
- Joined a deputation led by the British Council to the Home Office.
- Type of services continues as last year.

1998

- Home Office announced a general amnesty to grant on Individual basis, Exceptional Leave to Remain [ELR] to the applicants who made their applications between July 1993 and December 1995.
- However, applicants who made their applications before July 1993 Were given a blanket general amnesty with the grant of Indefinite Leave to Remain [ILR].
- New Immigration and Asylum Bill introduced in the House of Commons 9 February 1999.
- Further changes and restrictions introduced through this Bill.
- Type of services provided continues as before.

1999

- TRAG office moves from Holborn to 55 Bondway, Vauxhall.
- Certain provisions of the 1999 Act will come into effect on 6 December 2000.
- Dispersal of refugee policy to be implemented from 1 April 2000.
- This Act brought in changes to the Voluntary Sector such as TRAG with regard to provision of immigration advice.
- Regulation applicable to Immigration Advisors.

2000

- Human Rights Act of 1998 came into force on 2 October 2000.
- Appointment of a new post in TRAG as Health Promotion Worker.
- Health Promotion Project funded by the National Lottery Charities Board launched on 12 February 2000.
- Rest of the services continue as before with addition of Health Promotion.

2001

- Human Rights Appeal granted under Section 65 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- This provides grounds for a further Appeal under Human Rights to Decisions made by the Home Office before 2 October 2000.
- Type of services provided continues as before.

2002

- The European Union signed an Agreement on 16 May 2002 with the Sri Lankan government - "The Readmission Agreement."
- This is to facilitate repatriation of Tamil Asylum seekers from Member States of the European Union.
- This is following the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities - Memorandum of Understanding on 23 February 2002, between the Sri Lankan government (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).
- Many adverse decisions from the Immigration Appellate Authorities and consequently asylum appeals, (many of them) failed.
- Services provided by TRAG as same as before.

2003

Remaining provisions of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 were brought into force on 1 April 2003, including Section 55. Accordingly, any in-country applicant must make application for NASS support "as soon as reasonably practicable" following challenge in Court, the Secretary of State ruled that it should be made within 3 days of arrival.

Most severe restriction was placed on the 23 July 2003 when Sri Lanka was put on the "White List." All decisions made under fast track 'Ockenden' procedure. If the application is refused and the Secretary of State issues a Certificate that "it is manifestly unfounded," then there will be no in country right of appeal. It could be exercised only upon return to Sri Lanka.

Our organisation retained the award of Quality mark and exemption granted by OISC at the corresponding Level 2 for Immigration Advice and Legal Help. Health Promotion Project extended to cover the boroughs of Barnet and Ealing. Inaugural celebration held on 9 August 2003. Services continue as before.

2004

This year London Borough Grants Units which funded the post of Co-ordinator and Case-worker ceased. LBGU name was changed to Association of London Government at the time when it ceased funding us.

However, due to our efforts, alternative funding secured, namely from the Community Fund with certain proportion of contribution from Comic Relief.

Family concession announced by the Secretary of State on 24 October 2003 was slightly amended to include children born on or before 24 October 2003.

The Home Office policy changed, following the Court of Appeal decision of "Mahmood," with regard to application based on marriage to persons either settled or British, by a person whose application for asylum has been refused. The Court held that such application must be regarded as jumping the queue. Hence, application must be made, in the usual way to the respective British High Commission / Embassy abroad. In other words applicant must return to their own country and make the necessary application to join the husband or wife as the case may be.

Further development, following the decisions of the Court in the case of "Arben Shala" was to the effect that if the Home Office delay considerably in making the initial decision of refusal, it might breach Article 8 - right to private life.

An additional event namely a Cultural Evening was held on 24 July 2004.

Other Services provided as same as last year.

2005

Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 brought into force on the 4 April 2005. Biggest shake up in the Immigration appeals system. The new Asylum and Immigration Tribunal commenced functioning from 4 April 2005. Home Office policy changed with regard to marriage application from 7 April 2005. Indeed, as a result of the change in law, now "refused asylum seekers" cannot give notice of marriage without obtaining appropriate permission (Certificate) from the Home Office. This means most of the applicants have to return to Sri Lanka and make marriage application, to the British High Commission, in the usual way and obtain Entry Clearance Certificate in order to join the husband or wife (as the case may be) in the U.K.

New changes have been made to the requirement for making application for naturalisation as a British Citizen. Since July 2004 any applicant who did not possess sufficient knowledge in English, has to follow English course and obtain ESOL Level 3 Certificate or confirmation by way of certificate from Solicitor/Notary Public of the required knowledge of English as adult native English speaker. However, as from 1 November 2005, any applicant, in addition to the knowledge of English language must also demonstrate knowledge of life in the U.K.. Test will be based on the book published on behalf of the Life in the United Kingdom Advisory Group, under the title "Life in the United Kingdom - A Journey to Citizenship." This could be purchased from the Stationery Office (TSO) for £9.99.

An additional office was ceremoniously opened on 23 July 2005 at 221 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 6HE. Services provided is same as before.

- 28 January 1988

Closed Doors:

New Restrictions on the Rights of Asylum Seekers

Tamil refugees have a special place in British immigration law and practice over the last few years. Their arrival has provoked restrictive new laws and practices which have tightened British immigration control and made it harsher and less humane for other non-European settlers and refugees as well as Tamils.

1. In 1985, it was the arrival of hundreds of Tamil refugees which triggered off the unprecedented decision to impose visas on nationals of a Commonwealth country. Until then, it had been unthinkable that Commonwealth citizens should require visas to come to Britain. But, even though Britain had received far fewer fleeing Tamils than many other European countries, the visa requirement was imposed to try to prevent them arriving here at all. The immediate effect was to reduce the number of Tamils arriving in Britain. The long-term effect was to pave the way for the visa requirement to be extended to five other black Commonwealth and ex-Commonwealth countries, whose nationals were identified by the government as "problems" who needed to be sifted out before being able to arrive in Britain. Refusal rates for visitors from those countries have soared, and individuals have experienced great hardship, especially in cases of family illness and emergency.

2. In 1987, the arrival of a much smaller group of 64 Tamils who had arrived via Malaysia and Bangladesh led to the swift passage through Parliament of the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, which gave the government the power to fine airlines up to £1,000 for each passenger they carried without valid documentation (including passports and visas). This meant that airlines were even more reluctant to carry undocumented passengers from visa countries, even if they had passed through a third country. It dramatically reduced the number of Tamil arrivals. It also had effects in other visa countries, as airline employees increasingly became unofficial immigration officers: for example, British children of Bangladeshi descent found it much more difficult to come to the UK to seek to establish their right to British citizenship.

3. The last two or three years have also seen the growth of attitudes and practices towards refugees and asylum-seekers which would have been inconceivable four years ago. The prolonged detention of asylum-seekers, for periods of over a year in some cases, was unheard of before 1986; the use of a prison ship, which almost sank during the 17 October hurricane, had been unheard of since Victorian times. The growing harshness of port procedures meant that refugees, after short interviews, have been physically and sometimes brutally forced on to planes and that there have been regular suicide attempts; but the actual suicide of one asylum-seeker held in detention in 1987 passed almost unnoticed in the British press. The summery removal of asylum-seekers, even while their cases were under consideration by the courts, has meant that lawyers have had to take the unprecedented step of seeking individual injunctions from the courts to prevent people being removed before their cases have been properly considered. The right to intervene on behalf of refused asylum seekers was also attacked: both UKIAS and MPs found that their access to asylum-seekers and their powers to make representations were severely curtailed during 1987. Tamils were the first group to provoke this new restrictiveness and inhumanity; but other non-European refugees, particularly Kurds, Iranians and Africans, have suffered from these practices as well.

4. Tamil refugees who have managed to act here and have been given exceptional

leave to remain can also face hardship through family separation. The Home Office has said that it will not normally grant a visa for family members to Join someone here on exceptional leave. The "special hardship visas" which are allegedly available in Colombo are issued very rarely and under very restricted conditions. So Tamils who are already exiled face the possibility of seven years' enforced separation from their families as well.

The change of attitude towards refugees has led to a great deal of concern even among groups which are not normally associated with refugee or immigration campaigning. Charter '87 has brought together peers, judges and actors; Amnesty International has launched its first campaign on issues inside the UK; there has been the formation of an all-party (mainly Conservative) Parliamentary refugee group including a past Home Office immigration minister.

The reasons for the new harshness

The Tamil issue is connected with the much wider issue of European attitudes to immigration from outside Europe - the development of a "fortress Europe" mentality. This first surfaced openly and publicly in Britain in the Home Secretary's introduction to his Immigration and Nationality Department's annual report in 1986. He said "The Third World is becoming increasingly footloose" - and identified cheaper international travel and the presence in the UK of settled black communities as increasing threats to Britain (and Europe)'s perimeter security. European interior ministers, including the British Home secretary, have been meeting regularly to co-ordinate European policy to keep out drug traffickers, terrorists and "unauthorised movements" (i.e. illegal immigrants and refugees). Any attempt to safeguard refugees' rights has led to wildly exaggerated statements from the Home Secretary: for example, in a radio interview claiming that if the court of appeal's judgement on the six Tamils was upheld in the Lords it would lead to 200,000 refugee arrivals; or his claim to the Church of England's General Synod that appeal procedures would inevitably lead to a build-up of 800,000 cases as in Germany. Throughout, there is the feeling of a country (or a continent) under siege.

What can be done?

There are various suggestions for action, which this conference will want to consider:

- the British Refugee Council plans for port procedures, which include a right of independent review for all asylum-seekers before removal
- the attempts to get together important people and decision-makers and interest them in refugee issues (Charter '87, the Asylum committee)
- possible use of the European Convention of Human Rights, particularly in cases of family separation
- working Europe-wide with other refugee groups and agencies
- developing a network in this country of refugee groups, lawyers and agencies to co-ordinate efforts and share information

It is likely that any change will be long-term - nothing much is going to happen immediately. It is important that any campaign involves both those directly affected and those with access to decision-makers. Above all, we need to be able to convert the general goodwill towards refugees and the horror that many people feel at what is now happening into a positive and co-ordinated campaign for change in laws and practices.

It is very appropriate that these issues are being considered at this conference. Tamil refugees have suffered from and have been the excuse for tightening and dehumanising British refugee and immigration policy and practice; they therefore have a unique contribution to make in developing and publicising the opposition and the alternatives to that policy, both in Britain and in Europe.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

CHANGING NEEDS

The need of TRAG organisation was changing from campaign work to welfare. In the late Nineties, especially to meet the changing needs of refugee arrivals, TRAG had to change its strategic outlook and meet the going need.

The Tamil community in the U.K. faced different problems after the resettlement of refugees. From 1990 to 1998 and thereon, sustainability and social integration in Mainstream Britain, was the priority of the day. Adapting refugees to an alien environment required housing, social, and educational and welfare services.

The Management of TRAG and its well wishers developed a working plan and a programme to suit the prevailing needs. If the organisation had not accepted this reality, TRAG could not have survived, as funding its activities was crucial. Besides, TRAG could also have not fulfilled the needs of the Tamil community.

Integration within the mainstream of the host nation, without losing the identity of the Tamil community was the essence of this change. To fulfil this requirement TRAG established a new Constitution with charitable status objective. TRAG received registration as a Charity in 1998, helping to change lives around.

Various other Refugee communities followed TRAG lead and action. The Kurdish, Somali, Filipino, African and Latin American communities in UK also followed suit and looked to TRAG for assistance and advice in charity law and formation.

The value of charitable status is threefold:

1. automatic fiscal privileges
2. access to grant funding and
3. public fund raising.

Charity compliance

The principle that charities should be non-political is highly restrictive in British Law, again influenced by Trust Law. Purposes directed at changing the law or government policy are regarded as political and incompatible with charitable status.

The fact that the Charity Commission has recently accepted the promotion of Human Rights as charitable confirms, rather than being an exception to the above

principle, since it is based on the fact that the European Convention on Human Rights has been made a part of UK Law by the Human Rights Act.

The Charity Commission has however, been able to mitigate the effect of this by giving guidance enabling charities to engage relatively freely in campaigning and advocacy, provided that it is in pursuance of their charitable purposes.

Charities can play a vital role in contributing to the process of progressive social change. Charities in fact, have a unique contribution to make to the world of political debate and policy making. This contribution is based on their practical experience of problem solving backed by high public regard. In line with their objects, charities can change public perceptions of problems which can lead to shifts in government priorities and resource allocation. This can bring about more positive change and benefit many more people.

Charity campaigning is not only an effective use of charitable resources for charitable ends, but enables effective and progressive charities to engage in relevant aspects of the political process. Thus to remain silent is not just to miss an opportunity, but tacitly to accept the existing situation or status quo.

The Review of the Register of Charities announced by the Charity Commission in the spring 1998 states: "charities can undertake campaigning activities if those activities can reasonably be expected to further their legal aims. Any campaigning must be based on a well founded and reasoned case and expressed in a reasonable way. But, it cannot and must not be in general support of the policies of any particular political party."

TRAG campaigning prior to its registration complimented and reinforced the work it did on the ground in emergency situations and in its long term development work in housing and education among refugees. It was responsible helping to branch out in the formation of two separate organisations, Tamil Refugee Housing Association (now TCHA) and Tamil Rehabilitation Technical & Educational Organisation (TR-TEC). Now, its campaigning is focussed on where it believes it can have its most impact on Health Promotion and Women Welfare.

TRAG uses a range of approaches to achieve change and improve refugee resettlement and longer term development programme in Health Promotion Education and Seminars to achieve lasting change to the Tamil community.

Whilst it receives significant funding from national charities such as National Lottery, Comic Relief and City Parochial Foundation in London, part of its support in the future is anticipated from private benefactors and Trust funds.

David Brindle of The Guardian writes: "When people think of charities, they tend to think of big names. But it is smaller charities that come up with the most innovative ideas to address pressing social issues. Smaller charities have flexibility, the creativity and the direct contact with the community that helps fresh thinking flourish. What they all too often do not have, though, is public recognition of their achievements."

Charity Funding and Campaign Delegation

Some of the serious campaign issues affecting refugees continued to be delegated by TRAG through choice, to other Tamil organisations which were not registered charities. Noteworthy among them are Tamil Information Centre (TIC) and Medical Institute of Tamils (MIOT).

Prior to TRAG formation all campaign work in the early eighties was actively pursued by the Tamil Information Centre, London. When Sri Lankan Air Force bombers pounded villages and towns including Churches and Temples full of Tamils and School playgrounds housed Tamils fleeing from torture and persecution by Government troops and other elements, many expatriates and people in the UK, who though shocked by these atrocities, were able to obtain these first hand reports direct from Tamil Information Centre (TIC).

Stories and press reports of Tamils being buried in mass graves like the one which was dug out at Chemmani, in the Jaffna Peninsula, opened the conscience of many Europeans also thanks to the work of Tamil Information Centre, in London, in the 1980s.

Tamil Information Centre as a campaign organisation was thus able and well equipped to take on the advocacy issues which TRAG felt it could not pursue effectively and efficiently. This was not because TRAG was a Charity, but because TIC had at its disposal the documentation in its archives of the Tamil struggle for freedom.

Tamil Information Centre challenged Home Office authorisations issued under the Race Relations Act 1976 in the High Court. The Court maintained that the orders were unsound and unsatisfactory and ruled that by delegating the decision and discretion to Immigration Officers, the Home Secretary had granted licence to discriminate unlawfully and undemocratically. With the orders being rescinded, TIC created legal history for the Tamils at the turn of the 20th century



Tamil Information Centre

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PRESS RELEASE

18 October 2002

TIC INDEX:PR/JR/10-02

The High Court rules that the Home Secretary granted licence to discriminate unlawfully and undemocratically

The High Court today quashed the main provisions of an Authorisation made by the Home Secretary, which permitted serious discrimination on grounds of nationality.

The case was brought by the Tamil Information Centre (TIC). The London-based TIC has been involved in information, human rights and community development work for the past 20 years. The TIC launched a legal challenge against two Authorisations issued in April 2001 under Section 19 (1D) of the Race Relations Act 1976, which had the effect of discriminating against ethnic communities in the United Kingdom.

Mr Justice Forbes today quashed the main provisions of the First Authorisation. This Authorisation, issued on 2 April 2001, purported to allow immigration officers to decide for themselves when they could target persons of a specific nationality for more rigorous examination.

This is a double victory as the case had been expected to discuss the Minister's Second Authorisation as well. This targeted specific racial groups including Tamils. However, the day before the hearing, on 11 June 2002, this Authorisation was withdrawn.

Section 19D, introduced into the Race Relations Act by amending legislation after the Lawrence inquiry, was always contentious. Parliament required that any decision to target specific persons on grounds of nationality for heavier immigration control shall be taken "personally" at ministerial level. Mr Justice Forbes held that "...a licence to discriminate such as that envisaged by Section 19D can be expected to be subject to strict control and that in the present case Parliament has made it clear by the express terms of the section that the necessary control is to be by the democratic process, namely by any aspect of the power being clearly exercised by a minister accountable to Parliament".

By delegating the decision as to when to discriminate to immigration officers, the Home Office had acted outside these democratic controls.

The Tamil Information Centre is delighted with this outcome and Mr Arun Nathan said today:

"We said from the outset that this authorisation was unlawful as did many others including JUSTICE and the respected Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA). The Minister went ahead regardless and maintained the Authorisation in the face of fierce opposition."

The Tamil Information Centre were granted their costs in relation to bringing the judicial review of both authorisations. The Court refused permission to appeal.

The Tamil Information Centre was represented by Robin Allen QC and Simon Cox instructed by Winstanley-Burgess Solicitors.

For further information contact:

V Varadakumar at Tamil Information Centre, tel 0208 514 6390, ticorg@aol.com

Gita Williams at Winstanley-Burgess, tel. 0207 278 7911

Immigration Law Practitioner's Association, tel. 0207 252 8383, info@ilpa.org.uk



Demonstration

Demonstration



Community support to mental Health Service users

When the Directors of TRAG realised that some members of the Tamil community had specific health needs after years of turmoil in their lives, added by uprooting themselves from their ancestral homes, the social and cultural environment. In addition migrating which itself is stressful, traumatic followed by financial hardship, Unemployment all compounded the post traumatic stress, they found difficult to cope and they were overcome by feelings of despair, loneliness, anguish and fear all of which contributed to mental ill health.

It was also felt that women found it most difficult than men to attend a generic Drop in centre due to cultural and language barrier. Hence a drop in centre initially for women with the men coming in full day if there were seminars, workshops or Guest speakers. On other days men came in for lunch and stayed for the afternoon session. In the centre they overcome the language barrier and in addition to the fellowship they were able to openly talk about their difficulties, exchange information and experiences and learn from others. One of the Guest speakers mentioned she was there and how she overcome the ill health and now is a well accepted member in the community. This did uplift their mood. They knew that there were coping strategies and that they could be comfortable and forget the stigma of ill health. Some of the users both men and women work on a rehabilitation programme where they lived in homes before being fully integrated in to the community life. Others were living in their own homes with the family or by themselves who needed to socialise to be healthy. Therapy lessons were to learn to live with the illness, take regular medication and socialise which is very important to the rehabilitation process. English spoken and written being taught by Tamil speaking Volunteers and a researcher on migration. The form of therapy covered music, Art, Exercise, collage, origami writing, relaxation, stress management meditation and laughter. Research has shown that laughter releases endorphins that uplift the mood. At the exercise session the user was the leader and taught the participants users as well as volunteers what they had been taught at the hospital rehabilitation unit. Traditional games Pa-andi, Thayam, Kokantan were played. Kolatum was part of the exercise. Board games were also played.

All festivals Hindu, Christian, Muslim were celebrated with traditional food. The users requested volunteers to bring food they like, like Thosai, Vadai, muruku, Kool etc. During school holidays the children accompanied their parents a family outing. Children then felt that the parent and family are acceptable members of the community.

The Managers of the homes reported that there was a change in the attitude and behaviour after they attended the centre. Morose and sitting in a corner was now out going. Socialising, joking and laughing taking part in the outings and activities of the home.

This approach helped to overcome the stigma of mental ill health and encouraged them to accept their symptoms, seek treatment, and helped them in the program of their rehabilitation.

I should sincerely thank all the volunteers who were keen to an extended 'family' who helped them socialise and feel accepted and for the grateful thank to the Guest speakers and English Tutor.

It should be noted that the services provided for the Mental Health Service users were taken in to consideration by the funders when the grant was approved for the Brent & Harrow Health Promotion Project.

Dr.Jega Gnanapragasam
Ex. Secretary. TRAG

Dr.R.Somalingam
Ex.Assistant. Secretary. TRAG

HEALTH PROMOTION

Our successful Health Promotion Project is being well appreciated by all sections of the community in London.

The project was started without any funding in 1998 on the initiative taken by Dr (Mrs) S.T.Moorthy, the then Co-ordinator and Dr (Mrs) Jega Gnanapragasam, the Ex. Hony. Secretary TRAG.

Later on, in 1998 application was made to the National Lottery Charities Board for the Health Promotion Project after carrying out a health survey in the London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow personally by Dr.S.T.Moorthy. A three year funding for Brent & Harrow Health Promotion Project was granted.

A full time Health Promotion Worker was appointed from June 1999.

Care and Counselling service was given to the Tamil Mental Health Service users. While in Hospitals TRAG provided counselling, advice and interpretation. Dr.Mrs.Moorthy, Dr.Gnanapragasam and Volunteers usually visit their homes and accompanied them to the newly created Drop in Centre at the office,Vauxhall London. Several Mental Health Service users were successfully rehabilitated. Dr.Mrs.Thana Visuwaratnam Volunteer Counsellor – Psychotherapist attended to Counselling. Clients were accompanied to Surgeries, Hospitals and clinics. The services provided for the mental Health Service users were taken in to consideration by the funders when the grant was approved for the Brent & Harrow Health Promotion Project. The newly appointed Health Promotion Worker assumed duties in June 1999 and initially the project activities were slow and also the Health Promotion worker left the service in November1999.

A new Health Promotion Worker was appointed in February 2000 and the activities began to be accelerated. The inaugural meeting for this project was held on 12.02.2000 at Willesden Library.A large number of members of the Tamil Community attended. Councillor John Lebor, the Worshipful the Mayor of the London Borough of Brent was the Chief Guest. G.P's and Health Professionals participated and gave valuable Health Talks.

Health Seminars on very popular Health topics involving Medical Consultants, G.P's, Health Professionals were organised. Attendance rose progressively thereafter at the subsequent seminars.

The project became more and more popular after we started doing the Health Survey at target areas of the Boroughs of Brent & Harrow. Prior to doing Health Survey, data of Tamils were collected from Libraries by going through the Registered Voters register. The list of Tamils with their address made us very easy to access our clients to conduct the Health Survey, for giving health advice , distribution of health promotion leaflets in Tamil & English and to distribute notices to the Tamil speaking people without spending much time.

Following successful completion of the Brent & Harrow Health Promotion Project, the same funders have given us further funding to extend the Project to the adjoining Boroughs of Barnet & Ealing employing the same Health Promotion Worker.

The Project began in 15TH May 2003. The project developed to such an extent that the participants at our seminars included Worshipful Mayors, Members of Parliament, Local Councillors, Professors, Medical Consultants, Health Professionals, Community Leaders, Delegates from Voluntary & Statuary organisations etc

Several stalls have been put up at our seminar halls by Voluntary and Statuary Organisations. A large number of our Community members participated in these seminars which was held at different locations in the Boroughs.

LIST OF HEALTH SEMINARS HELD

- 12.02.2000 – Brent & Harrow Health Promotion Project
Inaugural Celebration & Health Seminar at Willesden
- 14.02.2001 – Seminar on Diabetes at Willesden
- 12.05.2001 – Seminar on Smoking , Alcohol & Drugs at Willesden
- 23.02.2002 - Seminar on Sexually Transmitted Diseases, HIV & AIDS at Alperton
- 14.09.2002 – Seminar on Coronary Heart Disease at Harrow
- 9.08.2003 - Extended Barnet & Ealing Health Promotion Project
Inaugural Celebration & Health seminar at Southall
- 14.02.2004- Seminar on Diabetes at Ealing
- 12.05.2005 – Seminar on Cancer at Colindale (Barnet)

In addition to the above a total of 16 Workshops, Health Talks & Discussions were conducted with the participation of the Local G.Ps and Health Professionals at different locations in the Boroughs.

Counselling Services

This service got interrupted for an year due to the non availability of a Volunteer Tamil speaking Counsellor. Mr. Joseph Chako a Qualified Tamil speaking Counsellor came forward to attend to counselling on a voluntary basis and the counselling services restarted in August 2004.

TRAG,s Health Promotion Programmes at I.B.C in Tamil

Miss.Rangah Balasubramaniam Medical student and TRAG's Volunteer presented TRAG supported Health Programmes at the I.B.C in Tamil for an year (2003 / 2004) on popular Health Promotion topics. This was listened and benefited by not only the Tamils living in U.K but the Tamils living all over the European countries

HOME VISITS, HEALTH ADVICE

A total of 705 Tamil Homes were visited at the target areas of these four Boroughs and 300 Tamil Homes were visited for the second time.

TAMIL HEALTH - PROMOTION LEAFLETS AND BOOKLETS

A total of 38 leaflets and booklets were prepared in Tamil and English under these projects. 13 of our leaflets were included in the 'A directory of Resources available in minority Ethnic Community Languages' published by N.H.S Scotland and another 3 leaflets on cancer were included in the 'Cancer Equality Organisation' Directory. Following the release of these directories, several national organisations, Statuary and Voluntary organisations from all over the country have requested for these leaflets in order to provide to the Tamil clients seeking advice from them.

DROP IN CENTRE FOR ELDERLY & DISABLED

The Drop in centre was functioning at TRAG for several years. Due to lack of accommodation and lack of funding we could not expand this centre. One of the tasks in the extended Health Promotion Project was to develop this centre. The launch of this event took place on 21st June 2004 and thereafter the Drop in centre is functioning well with more and more clients participating. A Television set and a computer is also available in the Drop in centre for the use of the clients.

TAMIL YOUTH DEAF CLUB

This club is in existence for the past seven years and meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm. The isolation for Tamil Deaf persons is acute and TRAG has been concerned with this problem. It happens to be the only Tamil Youth Deaf club in London. An estimated number of about 50 Tamil Deaf people are living in London of which about 16 deaf people are in contact with our club. Mrs. Ratneswary Ratnayake, Tamil Sign Language Interpreter and Mr. Naguleswaran Tharmalingam, British Sign Language Interpreter are attending to the interpretation on a voluntary basis at the Deaf Club. Also they attend to interpretation at the seminars and meetings organised by TRAG.



Drop in Centre activities



Deaf & Mental Health club

Tamil Women Welfare

The aim of the Tamil Women Project is to provide assistance to Tamil women to acquire skills required, particularly in their social needs for integration. Most of the refugee women were home bound or engaged in unskilled part time work. The Project Worker initially conducted research amongst Tamil women to establish their requirements.

English for the Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes were set up and run in association with the College of North West London, Wembley, at TRAG premises for our clients. This has helped some refugee women to converse in English, which is now also an essential requirement to obtain UK Citizenship.

Women are now becoming confident and able to deal with problems like domestic violence, children's education, and health issues etc. in spoken English with the authorities.

The Women's Welfare Worker has established good links with the local CAB (Citizen Advice Bureau) who regularly give Advice sessions for those in need of general financial management. This Project now needs a qualified, trained Tamil Counsellor for some women who are clearly under strain and in need of support for their depression and anxieties.

Tamil women are under a lot of pressure to remain in the home and they need a lot of encouragement and reassurance to make that first step towards learning English and other skills for employment. Although there are many ESOL classes conducted aimed at refugees, the fact that these are provided by a Tamil organisation, supported by a Tamil Women Worker, makes all the difference to the Tamil Women. Without this encouragement, they would not be able to embark on this path towards integration in mainstream society that can offer so much more to Women. Our ESOL classes are not necessarily about getting a job, but are part of a holistic service to Tamil women designed to break their barriers of under achievement caused by traditional family values.

TRAG initially commenced educational classes for Women only, but have found it was beneficial to have a mixed group. TRAG is now encouraging more women to participate in empowering women.

Case study 1.

Rani is a twenty-three year old woman who joined the TRAG ESOL class in 2002. After few months she told our worker that her husband who is a permanent resident in this country abused her. She has a four year old daughter who was hiding under the table every time her Mum was beaten. When Rani came to this country, she obtained a married Settlement Visa so she could not access any public funds. This situation made her more difficult to have an independent life. Our Women Welfare Worker put her in contact with the local Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) who assisted her to get her immigration status reviewed by the Home Office for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK pleading domestic violence.

Nearly three weeks were spent advocating with Social Service for support, due to her vulnerability. Social services refused to support her, as she was not entitled for recourse of public funds., Under compassionate grounds on basis of the Children Act, Rani was eligible for some assistance at One Stop for Living.. Now she is divorced, finished her ESOL Certificate. and living with her daughter.

Case Study 2

Karan is fifteen years old when he saw our TRAG ESOL leaflet in the local library. He completed the application to join the English class. TRAG Women Welfare Worker inquired about his immigration status and personal details. She found that he was under-aged to join the adult language classes.

Karan came to the U.K eight months ago .He stayed home because there were no vacancies in the local schools. She immediately visited their home and assessed their situation. He lives with his younger brother and his mother who was a single parent. They were all living in one small room and sharing one bed. Apart from that room they can only use the toilet and the kitchen. The younger brother goes to a middle school. Karan wanted to school, mix with children of his age and learn English. His mother was very poor in English. Our Women Welfare Worker took Karan to the Education Department and found a suitable place in a college. WWW also guided the mother to obtain a three bedrooms house. They were given all the support and advice to settle on their own and Karan is now currently studying and progressing at college.

Women Welfare Project offers:

1. Free and impartial advice, support services on Immigration and Asylum, Welfare benefits, Education and Employment to Tamil refugee women of Sri Lanka
2. Opportunities for training women volunteers to develop skills for good delivery of services.
3. Assistance to Tamil women and their families in finding housing accommodation from councils and housing associations.
4. Support and interpretation services to Tamil women in Hospitals, councils and other places
5. Help elderly women and the women with mental health problems through outreach services
6. Specialised services to women with hearing difficulties, torture victims and those who need help.

Sugi Gobiratnam

COMMUNITY CARE

Community Care is a way of helping people who need care and support to live independently in the community. For some that may mean receiving support from Social Services and to continue living in their own or rented homes. For others it may mean being in a Special Needs Housing, such as sheltered accommodation, flat, residential or Nursing Home.

People who need this kind of care and support are:

- * The elderly
- * The disabled
- * Those with mental health problems
- * Women experiencing Domestic Violence
- * Those with HIV/AIDS
- * Those who misuse drugs and alcohol
- * Any others needing special care

Community Care aims to meet the care needs. For instance, Social services can arrange 'Meals on Wheels', Day Centre places; Carers, if through illness or disability or age, persons are isolated. Many people are already receiving this kind of service. But Community Care in the Tamil Community can also help by responding to meet the needs in a new or different way, which gives Tamil refugees particularly, exactly the type of support they need. TRAG acts as this independent advocate so that their needs are recognised and met through referral and through other voluntary service.

What is new about Community Care in TRAG

As well as providing new kinds of care and support, the way needs are taken into account is somewhat different. Under Social Services, an Assessor, normally a Social Worker, will sit down with a claimant and their Carer, if they have one, to list the needs. The Assessor will then prepare a plan of the care and support the claimant will receive to match the description of their needs.

Under TRAG Community Care programme, an Independent Health Promotion Worker or a Women Welfare Worker as the case may be, will work with the Tamil claimant to make sure their client obtains a proper assessment.

As Social Services have a limited budget, they do not cover every need, but prioritise the most urgent requirements by examining the assessments. It is important that the claimant's view of their urgent needs is included in the assessment.

TRAG Case Workers help support to get their clients' views and needs across to service providers by:

- * giving information to their clients to have the confidence to speak up for themselves
- * working with them to put their needs and opinions into written or spoken words
- * attend with them when they meet Social Service Departments, Benefit Centres
- * supporting them if and when necessary to make a complaint when things go wrong
- * make sure client opinions are clearly known to social planners/managers.

In recent years with restrictions of the support available to refugees, TRAG has had to take on an additional burden of diversifying its activities of not only support but the provision of additional service such as establishment of Day Centre, Deaf Club, Counselling etc.

COUNSELLING SERVICES SINCE MAY 1999

by Dr Thana Visuvaratnam

Counselling for the Tamil Refugee has been an on going program at the Vauxhall centre TRAG since May 1999. Although initially the session were held once a week, now due to the increase in the client number it is held biweekly.

Client seeking counselling come from all parts of London. This is greatly facilitated by the central location of the Centre and its easy access by train and bus services.

The emotional difficulties of the refugees vary in severity and duration. The confidential nature of the service limits me from enlarging further.

These clients present with communication difficulties (most of them are non English speaking). This lack of expression and the disclosure of their feelings prevents them relating with their doctor, leads to patient frustration and inadequate / inappropriate treatment. Here the Interpreter services does not seem to help as the interpreters do not have any knowledge on Mental Health. A well trained, interpreter service is needed.

Most of these clients are in placement that is foreign to them - language - behaviour and cultural practises - as a result they are isolated and have no stimulation or integration with others. If action is not taken, we will properly have number of inactive people spending their time in front the of T.V watching program they do not understand! I feel a home for these clients where they can communicate, interact and share common cultural practises is needed to promote their emotional development and well being.

There are also other client with Mental Health problems living in isolation with no family support. Some of these clients are responding well with excellent support by the staff attached to TRAG.

The number of clients who attend are only the tip of a iceberg - there are probably many more out there crying for help.

Need for a Counselling Surgery

Tamil refugees came to Britain to seek refugee from physical torture and psychological trauma. Many indeed, did feel immense relief at reaching a safe haven knowing their lives were no longer under threat. But, their conditioning and language were barriers. This precluded many from seeking counselling to ease their internal pain and suffering. With few trained Tamil speaking counsellors in U.K., they had to rely on Interpreters for their care and concern.

The pioneering initiative with funding received from Lady Balogh Psychotherapy Trust, London helped to support a Tamil Director/volunteer student over two years in 2004/5 to complete his Diploma in Person Centred Counselling.

Tamil Counselling Services Today

TRAG launched a pilot Counselling project in August 2004. The scope of the programme was to support displaced and traumatised members of the community who live in Greater London.

It is well known that there is a dearth of Tamil speaking counsellors. A great interest was thus shown from clients of all walks of ~~lives~~ from various boroughs in London. Affordability was their prime concern as counselling and interpretation are costly. TRAG provided free counselling in Tamil for the most needy clients.

From the feedback and the enthusiasm of our clients, the demand had to be met. The unexpected tsunami disaster added to the caseload.

Among the category of clients supported by TRAG were displaced persons. Many of them are isolated in the UK, and present symptoms of Post Traumatic System disorder (PTSD), due to persecution and organised violence.

According to our survey, among disaffected and resettled Tamils, many relied on Alcohol to cope with emotional stress resulting in family problems.

We started a Basic Counselling Class for 10 weeks in order to encourage interested members of our community to become prospective counsellors.

We trained 8 interested students. This was a bilingual class with the emphasis on Tamil language for ordinary people. We found at the end, a few were willing to get enrolled for the proper courses for their further development.

The Chair, Vice chair, Directors, Staff and two Councillors from boroughs of Newham and Southwark also participated at the ceremony held to mark the end of the training. The event was covered by the Tamil Television "Deepam" and later was telecast for information of the Tamil community.

To meet the needs of our clients particularly youth, to minimise dependence on drugs and alcohol, as an escape route from their feelings and emotional burdens, TRAG is committed to lead the way by offering counselling to alleviate this emotional vacuum. We hope this action will further reduce domestic violence and other degrading anti-social behaviour to build up a healthy community.

K. C. Joseph (Dip in Counselling)

Tamil Counsellor



DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES - FAST FORWARD TO 2015

To complete our celebration of what is "Truly Tamil" today, we can project what 2015 could bring for Tamils in UK and for the service to be provided by TRAG.

Future society will view the annals of the previous twenty years as an experience, which was largely a period of deprivation and a struggle for existence of refugees. A denial of some of their basic human rights in Sri Lanka,, which caused their dispersal to far flung places and a sense of rootless-ness, should by now prove to be a thing of the past and consigned to history.

Tamil Diaspora by this time, would have provided the professional and financial expertise to rebuild the infrastructure of their homeland. This new type of "Marshall Plan" reminiscent of World War II, may well have the power and potency to reconstruct and develop their motherland, bypassing an age and moving to the 21st century. Tamils awaking to the "reality" and full potential of their intellectual and financial freedom abroad over decades, now feel more at ease to provide almost all the necessary amenities to their homeland, to match their lifestyle in the West.

Steadily, with this new found confidence and security and having won acceptance by integration in Britain, Tamils will begin to feel assured that maintaining their Tamil identity is neither incompatible nor in conflict with being British citizens. The rich mosaic of their language, culture, religion and emotional attachment with their motherland, will no longer be under threat, or their identity in any shape or form, be endangered. This awareness is bound to have its impact on service the organisations serving Tamils provide in 2015.

Plan of Action

TRAG by now, will have to consider a programme of activities catering for second and third generation Tamils, who may wish to continue to absorb and enhance their knowledge of the Tamil language, culture, heritage and social cohesion. This should not mean that they reject British values, which is part of their birthright. Far from it, they like many other nation peoples, who have previously re-settled in Britain, will enjoy the benefits of being British and Tamils. TRAG mission would thus aim to orient these Tamils to be valued citizens, without the need for enforced assimilation, which destroys the richness of a culturally diverse society.

The "right to life" in the U.K. will remind Tamils of their duties and responsibilities as citizens. Perhaps, TRAG will have a role to play in "educating" Tamils not only of their rights, but also as compared with the rights of others, which put simply, was all about why Tamils fought to establish their "right to life in Sri Lanka."

By 2015, there may also be a parallel but an understandable instinct to start restricting movement, increasing surveillance and curtailing liberties to some extent, as life moves from an open to a more protective society, in the hope of combating forms of terror, in such a setting, many will feel alienated by the process of rapid change. TRAG having dealt with complex issues in the past such as:

- Psychological problems - depression, anxiety, low self esteem, social alienation, sexual dysfunction, intimacy and trust issues;
- Anti-social behaviour - aggression, delinquency, domestic violence
- Self-harming behaviour -deliberate self harm, alcohol and drug misuse
- Social consequences - relationship problems, marital breakdown, poor parenting

among others.

will be adequately suited to offer services such as therapeutic Counselling, Advice, assistance and support for not only afflicted Tamils but also for other multi-ethnic communities who may require this orientation. Although the problems were not solely Tamil issues, TRAG had gathered sufficient expertise to provide a facilitating service.

By 2015, TRAG Health Promotion, known as Wellbeing will require much of TRAG time. We often think of Wellbeing as happiness but it is more than that; it is improving our individual and collective wellbeing. There is widespread community concern that unhealthy selfishness, over-competition, is driving away more desirable Tamil values of trust, self-restraint, mutual respect and generosity. TRAG outreach can prove a valuable service in" re-forging "traditional values of a caring society.

Vision of "a world within us"

The challenge for TRAG in 2015 is to build a new campaign for improving wellbeing, by information on personal screening, fitness, diet and ways of leading meaningful lives. The most important part of this campaign is to inculcate a sense of belonging and support of our community by close personal and community relationships, by re-thinking special education, invest in early childhood and re-focusing time and energy.

When a community is strong, energetic, intellectually and emotionally influential and powerful, they will begin to talk about peace rather than war and neither be liable to be led by extraneous elements nor base its values on external forces. TRAG hopes that the world in 2015 is not outside us; but is within us.

Victor Cherubim

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

1985-1987

1. Ms. Rajes Bala	Chairman
2. Mr. N. Ranjith	Secretary
3. Fr. Elmo John Pillai	Treasurer
4. Mr. B. Ariyanayagam	
5. Mrs. Verna maheswaran	
6. Mr. Sathithas	
7. Mr. Jesson Emmanuel	

1987 -1988

1. Ms. Rajes Bala	Chairman
	(form 25.04.87 to 5.10.1987)
2. Mr. A.L. Vasanthan	Chair from 5.10.87
3. Mr. S. J. Joseph	Secretary
4. Mr. S. Varathalingam	Treasurer
5. Mr. S. D. Balarajah	
6. Mr. V.P. Lingajothy	
7. Mr. M. Pathmarajah	
8. Mrs. N. Subramaniyam	
9. Mrs. Verna Maheswaran	
10. Mrs. S. Varathalingam	
11. Mr. R. Satkunanathan	

1988 - 1989

1. Mr. V. E. Cherubim	Chairman
2. Mr. S. Pathmanathan	Secretary
3. Mr. S. R. Pasupathy	Treasurer
4. Mr. P. Nagulesan	
5. Mr. A.V. Sakthivel	
6. Mr. S. D. Balarajah	
7. Ms. Rajes Bala	
8. Mr. M. Gunalan	

1989-1990

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	Chairman
2. Mr. T. Sripathmanathan	Secretary
3. Mr. S. R. Pasupathy	Treasurer
4. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu	
5. Ms. E. P. Mann	
6. Mr. V. E. Cherubim	
7. Mr. P. Nanthacumar	
8. Mr. E. S. B. Pulendran	
9. Mr. S. Sivakanthan	
10. Mr. S. Thirunathan	
11. Mr. K. P. Nagulesan	
12. Mr. S. Pathmanathan	
13. Mr. A.V. Sakthivel	

1990-1991

1. Ms. E. P. Mann	Chairman
2. Mr. S. Nagendran	Secretary
3. Mr. S. Thirunathan	
4. Mr. R. Pathmanaba Iyer	
5. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu	
6. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	
7. Mr. V. E. Cherubim	
8. Mr. T. Sripathmanathan	
9. Mr. A.V. Sakthivel	
10. Mr. P. Nanthacumar	

11. Mr. K. P. Nagulesan
1991-1992

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	Chairman
2. Mr. S. Nagendran	Secretary
3. Mr. K. Thiruchelvam	Treasurer

4. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu
5. Mr. R. Pathmanaba Iyer
6. Mr. K.P.S. Chetty
7. Ms. E. P. Mann
8. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
9. Mr. K. P. Nagulesan
10. Mr. A.V. Sakthivel
11. Mr. N. Satyendra
12. Mr. S. Thirunathan
13. Mr. B. Tisseverasinghe

1992 -1993

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	Chairman
2. Mr. S. Nagendran	Secretary
3. Mr. P. Sangaravel	Secretary
	(till May 1993)
	Secretary
	(from May 1993)
	Treasurer

4. Mr. K. Thiruchelvam
5. Mr. K. P. Nagulesan
6. Ms. E. P. Mann
7. Mr. S. Thirunathan
8. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu
9. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
10. Mr. B. Tisseverasinghe
11. Mr. K. Alagarajah
12. A.S. Moorthy

1993-1994

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	Chairman
2. Mr. P. Sangaravel	Secretary
3. Mr. K. Thiruchelvam	Treasurer

4. Mr. K. Alagarajah
5. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
6. Ms. E. P. Mann
7. Mr. K. P. Nagulesan
8. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu
9. Mr. M. Naminathan
10. Mr. S. Thirunathan
11. Mrs. R. Thiruneelakandan
12. Mr. S. Nagendran
13. Mr. N. Satyendra
14. Mr. B. Tisseverasinghe

1994 -1995

1. 1. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu	Chairman
2. 2. Mr. P. Sangaravel	Secretary
3. 3. Mr. N. Kugapala	Treasurer

4. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
5. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
6. Mr. S. Thirunathan
7. Mr. B. Kumarasritharan
8. Mr. V. Balacrishnan
9. Mr. S. Navaratnam
10. Mr. P. Paskaran
11. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
12. Mrs. R. Thiruneelakandan
13. Mr. I. Segarajasinghe

1995 - 1996

1. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu
2. Mr. P. Sangaravel
3. Mr. N. Kugapala
4. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
5. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
6. Mr. S. Thirunathan
7. Mr. V. Balacrishnan
8. Mr. S. Navaratnam
9. Mr. P. Paskaran

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer

1996 - 1997

1. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu
2. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
3. Mr. N. Kugapala
4. Mr. P. Sangaravel
5. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
6. Mr. S. Thirunathan
7. Mr. V. Balacrishnan
8. Mr. S. Navaratnam
9. Mr. P. Paskaran
10. Mrs. L. Kankeyan
11. Mr. P. Kiritharagopalan

Chairman
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Asst.Treasurer

The following Directors were appointed on 28-12-96

12. Mrs. A. Jananayagam
13. Mr. M. Sivarajah
14. Mr. S. Masilamani
15. Mr. K.Z. Arulanandan

1997 - 1998

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
2. Mr.S. V. Moorthy
3. Mr. N. Kugapala
4. Mr. V. E. Cherubim -
5. Mrs. K. Maheswaran -
6. Mrs. S. Varathalingam
7. Mr. T. Puvanasundararajah
8. Dr. (Mrs). J. Gnanapragasam
9. Mr. P. Kiritharagopalan
10. Mr. P. Paskaran
11. Mrs. S. Sivagnanasundaram
12. Dr. A. Thurairajah
13. Dr (Mrs). J. Sabanathan
14. Mr. A. K. Vaitamuththu
15. Mr. S. Navaratnam
16. Mrs. L. Kankeyan
17. Mrs. A. Jananayagam

Chairman
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Asst.Treasurer

1998 - 1999

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
2. Mr.S. V. Moorthy
3. Mr. N. Kugapala
4. Dr. (Mrs). J. Gnanapragasam
5. Mr. T. Puvanasundararajah
6. Mrs. S. Varathalingam
7. Dr. A. Thurairajah
8. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
9. Mrs. K. Maheswaran
10. Mr. P. Kiritharagopalan
11. Mr. P. Paskaran
12. Mrs. S. Sivagnanasundaram
13. Dr (Mrs). J. Sabanathan

Chairman
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Asst.Treasurer

1999 - 2000

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
2. Mr.S. V. Moorthy
3. Mr. N. Kugapala
4. Dr. (Mrs). J. Gnanapragasam
5. Mr. Puvanasundararajah
6. Mrs. S. Varathalingam
7. Mrs. K. Maheswaran
8. Dr. A. Thurairajah
9. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
10. Mr. P. Kiritharagopalan
11. Mr. P. Paskaran
12. Dr(Mrs). J. Sabanathan
13. Mrs. S. Sivagnanasundaram

Chairman
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Asst.Treasurer

2000 - 2001

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
2. Mr.S. V. Moorthy
3. Mr. N. Kugapala
4. Dr. (Mrs). J. Gnanapragasam
5. Dr. A. Thurairajah
6. Mr. Puvanasundararajah
7. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
8. Mr. P. Paskaran
9. Mrs. S. Varathalingam
10. Mrs. K. Maheswaran
11. Mrs. S. Sivagnanasundaram
12. Mr. P. Santhikaumar
13. Dr. Somalingam
8. Dr. A. Thurairajah

Chairman
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Asst.Treasurer

2001 - 2002

- 1.Mr. C. Sithamparapillai
- 2.Mr.S. V. Moorthy
3. Dr. (Mrs) J. Gnanapragasam
4. 9. Dr. K. Balendran
5. Mr. N. Kugapala
6. Mrs. K. Maheswaran
4. Dr. R. Somalingam
7. Dr. A. Thurairajah
8. Mr. V. E. Cherubim
10. Mrs. A. Sooriyakumar
11. Mr. S. Velupillai
12. Mr. T. Thirunavukarasu
13. Mrs. S. Varathalingam

Chairman
Vice Chair
Secretary
Asst Secretary
Treasurer
Asst.Treasurer

2002 - 2003

Mr.C.Sithamparapillai - Chairman
Mr.S.V.Moorthy - Vice Chair
Dr.J.Gnanapragasam - Secretary
Mr.N.Kugapala - Treasurer
Dr.K.Balendran - Assistant Secretary and Staff Director
Mr. S. Varathalingam
Mr.V.E.Cherubim
Dr.R.Somalingam
Mr.S.Velupillai
Mr.T.Thirunavukarasu
Dr.Meena Gurunathan
Dr.A.Thurairajah

2003 - 2004

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	Chairman
2. Mr. S. V. Moorthy	Vice Chair
3. Mr. V. E. Cherubim	Secretary
4. Dr. K. Balendran	Asst Secretary
5. Mr. N. Kugapala	Treasurer
6. Dr. R. Somalingam	
7. Mr. K. Maheswaran	Asst. Treasurer
8. Dr. A. Thurai Rajah	
9. Dr. (Mrs). Meenachi Ammal Gurunathan	
10. Mr. S. Velupillai	
11. Mr. T. Thirunavukarasu	
12. Mrs. S. Varathalingam	
13. Mrs. Pushpananthi Kugachandran	

2004 - 2005

1. Mr. C. Sithamparapillai	Chairman
2. Mr. S. V. Moorthy	Vice Chair
3. Dr. K. Balendran	Secretary
4. Mr. N. Kugapala	Treasurer
5. Mr. V. E. Cherubim	Asst. Treasurer
6. Dr. R. Somalingam	
7. Mrs. K. Maheswaran	
8. Dr. A. Thurai Rajah	
9. Mr. S. Velupillai	
10. Mr. T. Thirunavukarasu	
11. Mr. S. Varathalingam	
12. Mrs. Pushpananthi Kugachandran	

STAFF OF TRAG**1985 - 95**

1. Mr. Ranjithkumar	Transferred to TCHA
2. Ms. Luxmy	11 Years of Service
3. Mr. Manoharan	Transferred to TCHA
4. Ms. Mary Nirmalanayagam	
5. Ms. Venny maheswaran	
6. Mr. Varathakumar	11 Years of Service
7. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Joined in 1988
8. Dr (Mrs). T. Moorthy	1990-94 Women Welfare worker
9. Miss. B. Arumugam	Women Welfare Worker
10. Mr. R. Jeyadevan	
11. Dr. Mahendran	Worked for one Year
12. Mr. Sivakanthan	

1995 - 96

1. Mr. V. Varadakumar	Co-ordinator Until 30th June 1996
2. Mr. R. Jeyadevan	Locum Co-ordinator (form 1-7-96)
3. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Case Worker
4. Mrs. J. Rajakulendran	Women Outreach Worker
5. Ms. B. Arumugam	Women Welfare Worker

1996- 97

1. Dr (Mrs). S. T. Moorthy	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Jeyadevan	Locum Co-ordinator (Until 06.97)
3. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
4. Ms. B. Arumugam	Women Welfare Worker: Until July 97

1997 -98

1. Dr (Mrs). S. T. Moorthy	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
3. Mrs. R. Rajakulendran	Women Welfare Worker

1998 - 99

Not Available in the Annual Report

1999-2000

1. Dr (Mrs). S. T. Moorthy	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
3. Mr. S. Kathirgamu	Health Promotion Worker
4. Mrs. S. Gopi	Women Welfare Worker

2000 - 2001

1. Dr (Mrs). S. T. Moorthy	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
3. Mr. S. Kathirgamu	Health Promotion Worker
4. Mrs. S. Gopi	Women Welfare Worker

2001 -2002

1. Dr (Mrs). S. T. Moorthy	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
3. Mr. S. Kathirgamu	Health Promotion Worker
4. Mrs. S. Gopi	Women Welfare Worker

2002-2003

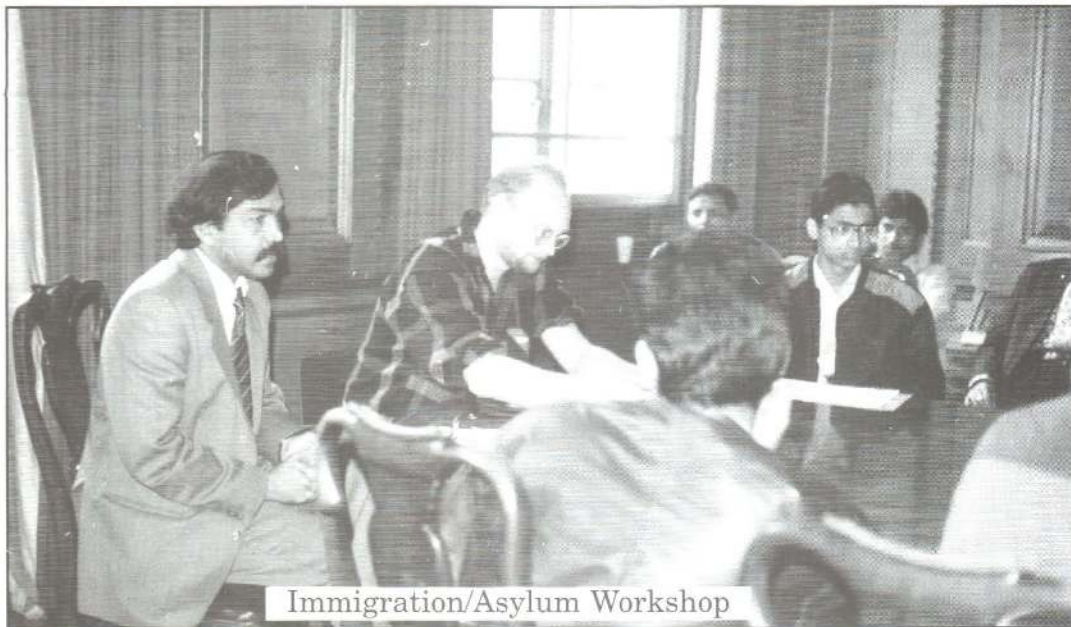
1. Mr. S. Karunanandarajah	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
3. Mr. S. Kathirgamu	Health Promotion Worker
4. Mrs. S. Gopi	Women Welfare Worker

2003 -2004

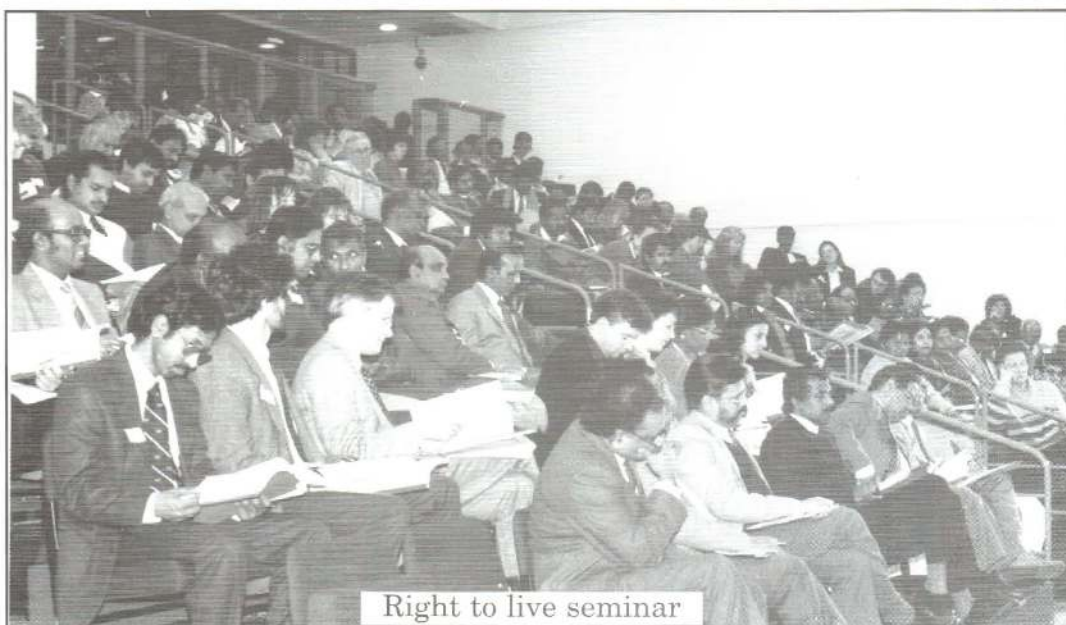
1. Mr. S. Karunanandarajah	Co-ordinator
2. Mr. R. Navanayagam	Caseworker
3. Mr. S. Kathirgamu	Health Promotion Worker
4. Mrs. S. Gopi	Women Welfare Worker

Volunteers 1985 -1995

1. Ankayalkanni	11. Bala	23. Krishnan
2. Clive Boutle	12. Constantine	24. Maheswaran
3. Gengatharan	13. Kirupainathan	25. Pushparajan
4. Kuhachandran	14. Liz Philipson	26. Ravi
5. Muruganandan	15. Neminathan	27. Rasanayagam
6. Sothy	16. Rajani	28. Selva
7. Ravi Sundaralingam	17. Ronney Moodley	29. Sivalingam
8. Sarojini	18. Sathiamoorthy	30. Thillai
9. Sivananthan	19. Siva	
10. Visahan	20. Thambiah	1995 - 96 None
	21. Charles	1997 - 97 None
	22. Kanthan	1997 - 98 None



Immigration/Asylum Workshop



Right to live seminar



Right to live seminar

Network organisations

Advice UK
Asian Women's Centre
Barnet Multicultural Health & Social care Network
Barnet Refugee Forum
Barnet Voluntary Service Council
Black Londoners Forum
Black Women's Mental Health Project
Breast Cancer Care
Brent & Harrow Health Authority
Brent Association for Voluntary Action (BrAVA)
Brent Community Network
Brent Community Partnership for Policing
Brent Domestic Violence Forum
Brent Health Action Zone
Brent Healthy Living & Community Involvement Work stream
Brent Indian Association
Brent Race Health & Social Care Forum
Brent Refugee Forum
Brent women Centre
College of North West London
Compusoft Training Centre

Ealing Race Health & Social care Forum
Ealing Refugee forum
Evelyn Oldfield Unit
Harrow Refugee Forum
International Organization for Migration
Iraqi Community Association
Iraqi welfare Association
Lady's Creative Centre
Middlesex Tamil Academy
National Council for Voluntary organisations (NCVO)
Nepalese Women's Association
Refugee Arrivals project
Refugee Council
Refugee women and children experiencing domestic violence
Refugees Into Job
Renewal
South London Tamil Welfare Group
Tamil Community Centre (Ealing)
Tamil Community Centre (Harrow)
TCHA Tamil Community Housing Association
The Refugee Council
Tamil Refugee Training and Education Centre
Waltham Forest Tamil Sangam
West London Women's Refugee Forum



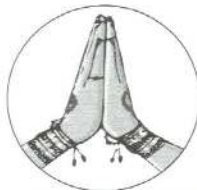
Bridge House Trust



இனிது கூறல். .

இன்முகம் காட்டி நெஞ்சிற்(கு)இனியன கூறி - வந்தோர்
சொன்னவை செவிமடுத்து சோகத்திற் கலந்து - அன்னார்
நன்மையே கருத்தாய் எல்லா நடவடிக்கையும் மேற்கொண்டு
இன்னமும் இடைவிடாது இருபது வருடப் பூர்த்தி
தன்னிலும் புது வீச்சோடு தமிழரின் நலமே மூச்சாய்
உன்னியே சேவைதன்னை ஒருப்பட ஆற்றுகின்ற
தன்னிகரில்லாத் 'தமிழ்' அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்
குழு' வெனும் திரு நாமத்தைக் கொண்டவெம் ஸ்தாபனத்தை
விழவிடா தூன்றுகோலாய், வெற்றியின் சின்னமாக்க
முழுமனதோடுபாடு படும் செயற்குழுவினோடு
கரு, நவா, மிஸ்ஸிஸ் கோபி, கதிர், மற்றும் தொண்டர்மார்கள்
திரு நிதியளிப்போர் மேலும் சேவையில் ஓர் குடைக்கீழ்
வருகிற நிறுவனங்கள், வள்ளல்கள், அனுதா பிகள்
தருகிற பலமே இன்றும் தக்கவைக்கிறதாம் அ.தோடு
இற்றை நாள் தன்னை நல்லோரினிய நாளாக்க வென்றே
சுற்றமாய் சொந்தமாக சுழன்றவர் பலபேர் - இந்த
வெற்றியில் பங்குகொண்ட மிகு பலபேர்கட்கெல்லாம்
அற்றைநாள் அவலம் யாவும் அகற்றி நல்லுயர்வு தன்னைப்
பெற்றிட உழைத்த தங்கள் நிறுவனம் என்ற இறும்பூ(து)
உற்றது அதனால் இங்ஙன் யாவர்க்கும் இனிமை சொல்வாம்.

எஸ். கருணானந்தராஜா
இணைப்பாளர்-
தமிழ் அகதிகள் நடவடிக்கைக்குழு



Message from Lee Jasper

On behalf of the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, I congratulate TRAG on its 20 years' service to the Tamil community.

In our view, this is also a service to the city as a whole. The Mayor is clear that London's refugee communities have played a valuable role in London's development, and can help to shape the city's future. He is determined that London make the most of the opportunity presented to it by the arrival of refugees.

But to achieve that goal, we need robust refugee community organisations. We need the stability, support and sense of identity which they offer these new Londoners - in an environment where all too often they are faced with instability, hostility and social exclusion.

The TRAG's fine record of service to one of our major refugee groups has shown the difference which a strong, vibrant community organisation can make. We look forward to working with the Action Group and our Tamil citizens over coming years, to ensure that they can play their full part in the life of our city.

Lee Jasper

Policy Director (Equalities and Policing), Greater London Authority
on behalf of the Mayor of London

(Message received on 28 October 2005)



Tamil Women Welfare
Meeting

Mental Health Advisory
meeting



Diabetic Workshop -
Willesden

Mental Health &
Deaf club outing



தமிழர்
சமூக
வீட்டு
வசதிக்
கழகம்



TAMIL
COMMUNITY
HOUSING
ASSOCIATION Ltd

நாம் இலண்டனில் தமிழர்
சமூகத்திற்கு வீட்டு வசதிகளை
வழங்கி வருகின்றோம்.

We are providing housing
accommodation for the
Tamil Community in
London.

மேலதிக விபரங்களுக்கு தயவு செய்து எம்மைத்
தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்

Please contact us for further details

10 Hatherley Mews
Walthamstow
London
E17 4QP

Tel. 0208 520 2042
Fax. 0208 520 2044
director@tamilhousing.org.uk
www.tamilhousing.org.uk

நாம் ஒரு பதிவு செய்யப்பட்ட சமூக வீட்டு வசதி நிறுவனம்
We are a Registered Social Landlord பதிவுதலை
RSL No: L4376)



10 Hatherly Mews
Walthastow
London
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Tel. 0208 520 2042
Fax. 0208 520 2044
email- director@tamilhousing.org.uk
www.tamilhousing.org.uk

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