ANNUAL REPORT

Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka

The Association of War Affected Women presents its annual report concerning the programs and activities implemented during the year 2014, working towards a peaceful Sri Lanka.
About Us

The Association of War Affected Women was established in 2000 to create a space for war affected women, specifically mothers and wives, of those who are missing to come together across the divide to work for peace. The Association of War Affected Women is committed to achieve sustainable peace in Sri Lanka and believes that peace has to be negotiated through an inclusive process.

We are also deeply committed to safeguard democracy and rights of all, specifically women's rights and advancement. As we believe that people’s rights have to be safeguarded and democracy has to be strengthening in order to create a conducive atmosphere for peace to prevail. We are working towards a peaceful Sri Lanka, where all its peoples will be able to live with dignity, enjoying equal rights.

**Reporting period:** 1st January 2014 – 31st December 2014

**Our Vision:** Peaceful prosperous Sri Lanka where all its peoples are living with dignity enjoying equal right

**Our Mission:** Work towards strengthening democracy, women’s advancement and equal participation in order to achieve sustainable development and permanent peace in Sri Lanka

**AWAW carried out four major projects in 2014 and they are:**

   a. 6 remaining district workshops, 7 regional workshops and 4 university workshops
   b. Advocacy and awareness campaign
2. “Women Defining Security, Realizing UNSCR 1325” – Phase II
3. “Women’s Space in the Political Arena: Proposals from the Parliamentary Caucus”
4. “Bringing Villages to Normalcy, Upholding Traditional Values towards Reconciliation”
GOAL OF THE PROJECT:
Enhance security for women and girls in post-war Sri Lanka

FUNDED BY:
Public Affairs office GWPS grant of US Embassy

This project was conducted in two sections.

1. **6 remaining district workshops, 7 regional workshops and 4 university workshops**

After the successful completion of District and Regional workshops in 2013 the 6 remaining district workshops, 7 regional workshops and 4 university workshops were held very successfully. 265 female and 190 males were directly benefitted through these workshops.

**District Workshops.**

**OBJECTIVES: THE DISTRICT WORKSHOPS**

1. To train local level law enforcement officials, civil security committee members, health officials and representatives of the local clergy on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 with particular emphasis on women’s and girl’s security

2. To establish regional committees in order to build up a network with the trained law enforcement officers, religious leaders and the health sector representatives to ensure women’s security and safety

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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>local level law enforcement officials</th>
<th>Government officials</th>
<th>Civil society and media</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
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AWAW
Regional Workshops

OBJECTIVE: THE REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Build coalitions among the participants from each region together with local level politicians while increasing the knowledge of the politicians of the prevailing issues in their respective areas.
University Workshops

OBJECTIVES- THE UNIVERSITY WORKSHOPS
To train university students on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 with particular emphasis on women’s and girl’s security.

Lessons Learned

♦ Very similar and different issues are faced by the local level law enforcement officials in dealing with violence against women and in some cases their attitudes as well the attitudes of the public towards police

♦ These workshops can be used as a space to bridge those gaps and render a better service to the public and most importantly to curb violence against women and girls

♦ Having University students on board brought the conversation into a different level
2. Advocacy and awareness campaign

After the completion of the 15 district workshops, 7 regional workshops and 4 university workshops an Island wide Advocacy and Awareness raising campaign took place. We were able to raise awareness through our advocacy and awareness campaign where nearly two hundred thousand people were reached directly through public meetings, posters, stickers and leaflets and many more through banners and children of all ages through our essay and poster competition. We were also able to reach all 431 police stations in the country, where each and every one was given banners leaflets and posters. We were able to gain support of all those who we had workshops with and carry out a very successful advocacy campaign.

List of Activities

- 9 Planning meetings in various parts of the country
- Social media reach and a press conference to make the general public aware of the campaign events
- An Island wide essay and poster competition themed “Let’s protect our childhood” for school children.
  *The competition was held for three weeks in August/September on the age categories of 6 – 8, 9 – 14, and 15 – 18 and received a total of 323 essays and 243 posters from all over the Island, this was done in both Sinhala and Tamil languages.*
- Distribution of Posters, stickers, banners and leaflets to 431 police stations in the country
• Distribution of Banners, posters, leaflets and stickers by local politicians and TEAM 1325
  Two leaflets, one with all necessary legal articles and phone numbers and the other with
  very important information for children specially girl child on their protection, and posters
  and banners themed “Let’s unite to Protect a Secure Tomorrow for Her” and stickers for
  public transport and school vans/buses in both vernacular languages was printed and
  distributed.

• Official launch of the advocacy campaign at the Dondra head to mark the beginning of
  the advocacy campaign

• Road show 01: Journey from Kalutara to Polgahawela Railway Station to distribute
  posters, Leaflets and stickers for public transport and school vans/buses, Her Excellency
  Shelly Whiting the Canadian High Commissioner, Her Excellency, Grete Lochen the
  Norwegian Ambassador and Madam Sherry F. Carlin, Nicole Chulick Director, American
  Center and Dawn Suni joined us for the journey as well we were joined by women and
  men politicians of all political parties.

• Road show 02: Journey to Jaffna Point Pedro to distribute posters, leaflets and stickers

• One day seminar and the poster exhibition in Kandy with the participation of more than
  575 men and women from all parts of the country- A Panel discussion on Sex and gender
  based violence and Distribution of Prizes for the winners of poster and essay completion
  took place
Women’s Space in the Political Arena: Proposals from the Parliamentary Caucus

June 20th 21st and 22nd 2014 at East Lagoon Hotel
Batticaloa

FUNDED BY:
Office of the Public Diplomacy of the U.S. Embassy

AWAW organized the two day interactive dialogue “Women’s Space in the Political Arena: Proposals from the Parliamentary Caucus” with the generous support of the Office of the Public Diplomacy of the U.S. Embassy. Forty eight female participants including one Parliament member, five provincial Council members and thirty Local government members of all political parties of the country, and women leaders including civil society members from all districts comprising all ethnic and religious groups of Sri Lanka participated in this conference.

Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, a jurist, an academic and an international expert on the rights of women and children and Dr. Deepika Udugama, the Head of the Department of Law, University of Peradeniya and a specialist in international Human Rights facilitated the two day conference guiding them through the discussion and the strategies they prepared.

The two days seminar was opened with a reception on the 21st June and Her Excellency Madam Michele J. Sison, United States Ambassador to Sri Lanka, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and noted several key points related to women and women empowerment during her opening remarks.
Women’s Space in the Political Arena: Proposals from the Parliamentary Caucus

Primary objective: enhance women’s political participation, by way of building a strong network of cross party women politicians of all the three tiers of governance in Sri Lanka.

THE CONFERENCE,

- aimed at elected women politicians of all parties in provincial and local governance taking ownership in collectively implementing the country action plan developed by the women parliamentary caucus and to enable them to net work through internet by way of being IT savvy.

- looked at addressing the needs of the members of the provincial councils and local government, and how women politicians can face the numerous challengers that they face, individually and collectively.
“Women Defining Security – Realizing UNSCR 1325”- Phase II

PROJECT FUNDED BY:

FOKUS WOMEN

Three main initial activities took place in this year.

**ACTIVITY 1.1.1 – What the Women Say “ACTIONS NOT WORDS COUNT”**

Launching the Advocacy Road Map for the full implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Sri Lanka -July 18th 2014 at Hotel Cinnamon Lakeside, Colombo

The advocacy road map developed by AWAW in partnership with diverse group of activists and organizations from across the country working on Women, peace and security was launched on the 18th of July 2014 with the presence of Madam Sanam Naraghi, international expert on women peace and security, members of the parliamentary caucus, Ambassadors, architects of the advocacy road map, heads of NGO’s and representatives as well as the donor agency representatives. Her Excellency President Chandrika Kumaratunga graced the occasion as the chief guest.

**Key issues presented in the advocacy road map:**

1. Inadequate women’s participation in politics.
2. Insensitivity towards women’s issues in the implementation of law.
3. Non implementation of the state policies concerning women.
4. Non implementation of LLRC recommendations pertaining to protection of women.
A two day interactive dialogue took place to discuss about the advocacy road map and its implementation on the 19th and the 20th of July 2014 at Hotel Tamarind Tree, Minuwangoda. Members of the Parliamentary Caucus, Members of the Provincial Council and Local Governments, architects of the Advocacy Road map, FOKUS partners, and representatives from embassies, members of the team 1325 as well as several members from the civil society took part in this two day seminar. This seminar also gained the input of an international expert, Madam Sanam Naraghi, cofounder of International Civil Society Action Net Work as well as a member of the civil society drafters of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

The content of the workshop:

- The Path to UNSCR 1325: the Journey Ahead
- How do we want to shape our future – lessons from the past and looking to the future – post 2015 Agenda
- Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security- A Brief Overview
A two day workshop was conducted to draft the commonalities of the Parliamentary women’s caucus action plan and the road map on UNSCR 1325 on the 9th and 10th of December at the Hotel Tamarind Tree, Minwangoda. Sixteen participants, including one Member of the parliamentary caucus, a member of the provincial council, architects of the advocacy road map and university students took part in the discussion.

After the comprehensive analysis of the caucus action plan and the advocacy road map on UNSCR 1325 three key common points were identified, and they are,

- Laws and policies concerning women
- Women’s participation in politics
- Women affected by natural or manmade disasters
Bringing Villages to Normalcy, Upholding Traditional Values towards Reconciliation

PROJECT FUNDED BY:

German Embassy, Colombo

Goal of the project: Enhancing human rights and human security in post war Sri Lanka through awareness and skills enhancement

This Project was conducted in two sections

1. Training of Trainers (TOT) for 10 human rights defenders

AWAW conducted a residential training workshop at Hotel Hilltop from 10th of September to the 14th of September on five interrelated subjects that covers basic law, human rights, CEDAW convention, UNSCR 1325 and 1820 and other relevant international and domestic instruments to 12 participants that comprised women lawyers, social workers and law apprentices. At the end of the program a pool of 10 women experts were selected and a training manual was prepared based on the five day training in order to use as a manual in facilitating the town level meetings. Experts on the subjects were brought in as resource personal from ministries, Universities, and civil society networks to facilitate the TOT.
2. 10 town level one day trainings in each of the selected 5 districts

Followed by the residential TOT, selected women lawyers conducted 10 town level one day training in each of the selected 05 districts for 300 women and men participants on human rights, CEDAW convention, UNSCR 1325 and 1820 and other international and local conventions and legal instruments. A significant portion of these participants comprised of youth, and leaders from community based organizations and prefects from schools.
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<th>District</th>
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<td>Ampare</td>
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➢ Chair of AWAW attended the panel discussion as an International panelist at the event organized by Code Pink and WILPF as well the Nobel woman’s initiative for Syrian peace talks in Geneva 20th to 22nd of January 2014.

➢ AWAW Chair Visaka Dharmadasa, Ms. Sumitra Ratnayake from the AWAW board, and Ms. Sara Arumugam participated in the AWAW’s study tour to Iran held from the 15th to the 23rd of February 2014.
AWAW board hosted U.S. Ambassador Her Excellency Michele Sison for dinner at the Earls’ Regency hotel, Kandy on the 4th of April.

Chair of AWAW participated at the “Combating Sexual Violence in Conflict” global summit held in London from the 10th to 13th of June 2014.
AWAW was invited by the Chief women’s development officer of the Kandy District to conduct a workshop on UNSCR 1325 similar to the one we did for the police officers, 35 women development officers were present from the district covering the divisional secretary divisions.

AWAW coordinated a study tour for University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, Japan. Eight University students and Two Professors joined the tour on the 16th and 17th of August. The students visited a children’s home in Kandy and spent time with the children as well as the team met with the Women’s groups in Thottama, Walathapitiya and Digawapiya in Ampare district.
AWAW Chair participated at the conference “Memorialization as an alternative or Complementary TJ measures- Exchange and policy development in Asia” from 3rd to 7th November 2014 in Bangkok.

AWAW participated at the conference “Third annual forum on women’s rights, peace and security in the Middle East and North Africa and Asia region” organized by the ICAN from November 7th to 12th in Sile, Turkey.
AWAW Chair participated at the “Role of civil society in strengthening rule of law-based responses to terrorism and violent extremism in South Asia” from the 3rd to 5th December at the Institute of South Asian Studies - National University of Singapore

AWAW Chair was invited to deliver a speech at the American Corner, Kandy on the 8th of December in commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism, on Violence against Women and International Human Rights Day.
A special thanks to our donors Public Affairs Office of US Embassy, GWPS initiative of US State Department, German Embassy, Cultures of Resistance, ICAN and FOKUS for their generous support.