THE ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

An annual report on the programs and activities implemented during the year 2017.

“Working towards a Peaceful World”

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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 strengthen 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.

VISION
Peaceful prosperous Sri Lanka where all its peoples are living with dignity enjoying equal rights

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

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Women taking leadership in post war reconciliation – Paving the way for Sustainable Peace in Sri Lanka
AWAW conducted training programs in Kandy (December 16\textsuperscript{th}& 17\textsuperscript{th} 2016), in Trincomalee (February 10\textsuperscript{th}& 11\textsuperscript{th} 2017) and in Jaffna (March 4\textsuperscript{th}& 5\textsuperscript{th} 2017). These workshops contained an introduction to conflict resolution concepts, an introduction to post-conflict peacebuilding concepts, a film, an introduction to transitional justice, the value of transitional justice in post-conflict Sri Lanka and future planning.
In each workshop, a conflict tree has been developed and the challenges in peace building in Sri Lanka have been determined. Through these group discussions, women’s voices are effectively heard.
1.2 Learning Exchange visits to Killinochchi, Mannar and NuwaraEliya districts

The exchange visits enabled these women to put into practice the knowledge they accumulated at the workshops which enhanced the effectiveness of their endeavors.

Understanding the importance of Women’s leadership in post war reconciliation towards sustainable peace in Sri Lanka; 75 local level women politicians belonging to Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and other ethnicities embarked on learning exchanges to obtain a deeper understanding of the practical aspects and the ground situations of the three selected districts, they are Kilinochchi, Mannar and NuwaraEliya.

In these exchange visits, four main issues were addressed: economy, land and housing, education and environment. In each districts, some special issues are identified as well, such as issues of the missing, women in governance, religious and cultural status, etc.
On the 19th of August, 85 women of all political parties and tiers of governance gathered to Kandy for the launching ceremony of the report of the learning exchange. There were women took part in the learning exchange, as well those who attended the theoretical aspect of Transitional Justice and Reconciliation workshops and others including board members of the Association of War Affected Women.
WOMEN IN POST CONFLICT RECONCILIATION:
THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION; JUSTICE, HOPE AND DIGNITY IN SRI LANKA

PANEL DISCUSSION
The panel discussion addresses the challenges that affect communities and especially women, as nations endeavor to grapple with the challenges of post conflict reconciliation processes and win the peace. Panelists will draw on lessons from Internationals best practices to inform the Sri Lankan process, while sharing lessons learned from the Sri Lankan experience. Additionally, the event will provide an opportunity to discuss the Better Peace Tool (BPT) to help ensure gender sensitivity in the design, substance, and inclusion of all groups, especially women, in the key components of the reconciliation process and to help determine the range of technical, political and financial resources needed for these processes. The role of women is vital given that, in Sri Lanka, women constitute a majority of the population at 52% and in the direct conflict affected areas the percentage is even higher.
The Association of War Affected Women held two peace tables, one in War affected Eastern province and one in the Central hills, where women have their unique issues. We drew from the international experience and learned from the Global South especially from Nepal where they are also going through a similar face of the peace process.

The Peace Tables in NuwaraEliya and Trincomalee featured several invigorating activities, such as panel discussions, keynote speeches, screening of the TJ animation and vigorous Q&A’s.
Nuwara Eliya Peace Tables

The Chair of AWAW Visaka Dharmadasa welcomed the Hon. Provincial council member Madam Saraswathi Siveguru and Ms. Flurina of Peace Women Across the Globe and Ms. Susan Risal from NagarikAwas, Nepal and all the women who came to the Nuwara Eliya peace table from the plantation sector and also from south from the TEAM 1325.

The panel emphasized the women of the war torn areas to be very active and play a crucial role in the reconciliation process of the country.

**Hon. Madam Saraswathi Sivguru** made the key note address at the Nuwara Eliya peace table.

**Moderator:** Hon. Wimali Karunarathna former provincial council member central province:

**The Panel:**

1. Indrani Kusumalatha;
2. Thilaka Weerakoon
3. Jessy Ariyarathnam

The Trincomalee Peace Table

The panel was informed of the absence of women in peace making procedures in Sri Lanka. The key note speakers emphasized the need for the role of women in the above mentioned activities. Additionally, the panel was educated on the conflict resolution processes in Nepal.

The key note speakers were Hon. Member of local government Kaithadi R. Janaki and Ms. Susan Risal from NagarikAwas Nepal

**Moderator:** Chandani Herath TEAM 1325 member and a gender expert

**The Panel:**

1. Ms. Sarah Arumugam a Lawyer and rights worker and 1325 expert,
2. Ms. Thanapakyam, NGO leader from Kilinochchi heading Mahashakthi foundation
INCREASING WOMEN IN UN PEACE KEEPING
3. Panel discussion: Increasing Women in UN Peace Keeping


The discussion was held on the occasion of the 17th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and brought together a variety of stakeholders including UN member states, UN agencies and civil society actors.

The panel discussed several pertinent issues and problems in relation to the role of women in society and also spoke on the topic of Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). The event sought to highlight the transformative effect of women in peacekeeping and explore what additional critical and catalytic steps the UN and its member states can take to resolve the aforementioned issues.
NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION SYSTEM AND WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

WORKSHOP
Women were made aware by Mr Rohana Hettiarachchi (Executive Director of PAFFREL) on the new local government election law specially the women’s quota.
• Consultation Taskforce on Reconciliation Mechanisms met His Excellency President Maithree Pala Sirisena
6. Global Involvements

- Institute for Inclusive Security – Annual Colloquium - Harvard University held in January.

- London: Global Solution Exchange of Women’s Alliance for Security Leadership and ICAN.
• The Fourth Annual Stockholm forum on Peace and Development co hosted by the Stockholm international peace research institute (SIPRI) and the Swedish ministry for foreign affairs at the Munchenbryggeri in Stockholm, Sweden.

• UN Women CESAG Meeting, Goa, India
• An event “Designing Our Secure Future” at the Strathmore Inn, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. (invited by Nobel Women’s Initiative and our secure future)
• Global women, peace and security forum in Washington, DC (organized by USCSWG and USIP in May)
• 1325 Workshop beyond borders, Scotland

• 2017 ASEAN conference on peace and the prevention of violent extremism at Manila, Philippines
• Matara Pacific Command Workshop on UNSCR 1325 in March 2017

• United Nations Head Quarters New York on Sustainable Peace
- November 10th in Morocco: 6th ICAN forum
• Global Unites - “the inclusion of women in peace building”

• In London Wilton Park for Women in mediation: Promoting Participation
• University of San Diego: Stronger Together – Women Waging Peace
Acknowledgments

A special thanks to our donors, for their generosity without which we would not have been able to continue our journey thus far.

Cheers,

The Team
Association of War Affected Women