2021
ANNUAL REPORT
Association of War Affected Women
# Contents

ABOUT US........................................................................................................................................ 3

AWAW’S WORK.................................................................................................................................. 4

- ROAD TO RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE, HOPE, DIGNITY AND STRONG DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN SRI LANKA – CELEBRATING THE PLURALISTIC AND DIVERSE NATURE OF THE REPUBLIC – WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON GENDER EQUALITY.................................................. 4

- ENHANCING WOMEN’S SKILLS ON MEDIATION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION FOR RECONCILIATION PROCESSES........................................................................................................ 39

- LAUNCH OF SRI LANKA WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORK ........................................................ 41

- GENDER JUSTICE AND SECURITY HUB....................................................................................... 42

- UN PEACEBUILDING FUND ........................................................................................................ 42

- SHE BUILDS PEACE CAMPAIGN – SRI LANKA............................................................................. 42

GLOBAL INVOLVEMENTS .............................................................................................................. 44
ABOUT US

The Association of War Affected Women (AWAW) was established in the year 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. Today, AWAW operates at the national and international level while continuing to work towards sustainable peace, strengthening democracy and supporting the advancement and participation of women in the social and political aspects of Sri Lanka.

OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

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

OUR OBJECTIVES

i. To achieve sustainable peace in Sri Lanka through socio-economic development with the active participation of war-affected women.

ii. Women’s advancement, empowerment, development and participation.

Reporting period: 1st January 2021 – 31st December 2021
AWAW’S WORK

ROAD TO RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE, HOPE, DIGNITY AND STRONG DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN SRI LANKA – CELEBRATING THE PLURALISTIC AND DIVERSE NATURE OF THE REPUBLIC – WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON GENDER EQUALITY

Funded by International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

ESTABLISHMENT OF 6 PEER COMMITTEES

Sri Lanka is at a cross road where women at the grassroots can play a crucial role in building trust and creating stronger relationships across ethnic and religious divides. It is very important to enable women at the grassroots to come together to build trust and pave the way for the much needed social harmony and peace.

Therefore 6 peer committees were established in each of the 6 districts namely Hambantota, Puttalam, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee & Monaragala. We chose 6 leaders who we have been working with us for decades, to lead the peer committees. Each group comprised of 10 women coming from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

A two day familiarizing workshop took place very successfully on the 16th & 17th January 2021 at Cinnamon Citadel Hotel, Kandy. Here the last year peer committee leaders explained and shared their experiences and the outcomes of implementing the program in 2020. They also mentioned about the challenges they faced and how they overcame the challenges and worked continuously with the women throughout the year.
The peer committee in each district gathered once a month for 12 months to coordinate an event which allowed them to work together, they engaged in activities such as cleaning religious places, demonstrating how to make compost for home gardening, cultural food preparation and demonstration and so on. This is very important and significant since these women come from very polarized backgrounds where the communities are very suspicious about each other after a 30 year long war and the Easter Sunday attacks.

AWAW visited each peer committee twice, first at the beginning of the program and later at the end of their activities.

**Hambantota**
Puttalam
Anuradhapura
Monaragala
2 ONE DAY WORKSHOPS ON DETECTING EARLY WARNING SIGNS FOR RADICALIZATION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING

The first workshop was held successfully on 24th April 2021 at Palmyrah House, Mannar with the participation of the Mannar peer committee and the second one was held on 31st July 2021 at East Lagoon, Batticaloa with the participation of the Batticaloa peer committee. These participants had come together 12 times during 2020 and they are now a very strong network. This training was done by an expert trainer, Mr. Arjun Ariyaratnam, attorney at law.
ONE DAY TRAINING OF TRAINERS ON DETECTING EARLY WARNING SIGNS FOR RADICALIZATION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING

Held successfully on 21st November 2021 at Riveira Resort, Batti with the participation of academics from the South Eastern University and the members of Kaththankudy Harmony Center.

There is a demand for further training of trainers on this area to be conducted for the harmony centers established in universities.
Sri Lankan Collective for Consensus

The genesis of the Sri Lankan Collective for Consensus (SLCC) was on June 23, 2021. This followed two earlier consultations in Kandy assembled by AWAW from among civil society leaders who were actively involved in dialogue on Conflict Transformation processes for over the past two decades. In depth discussion took place on the lessons learned on past reconciliation initiatives on what was right and what went wrong, what should have been done better and what should have been avoided. A 2-day dialogue on Civil Society Reflections & Experience Mapping of the Sri Lankan Peace Efforts & Developing a Strategy for Engagement on a Home Grown or Locally-driven Reconciliation Process was held on November 18 & 19, 2020. The second 2-day consultation on Celebrating Pluralism and Diversity - Civil Society Devising Strategy was held on March 11 & 12, 2021.

The identity of SLCC was defined as follows:

We are a group of individuals drawn from multiple sectors of society, religion, academia and non-governmental organizations who are committed to a Sri Lanka that is founded on ideals of pluralistic coexistence, human rights and justice.

The focus of the members was to remain a “Collective” and not take a critical form into another NGO, but move forward to deal with the current Sri Lankan realities in a holistic manner.

Some initiatives undertaken by SLCC are:

- To make a joint submission to constitutional reforms;
- Submissions on constitutional reforms were made to: Hon. Minister Mano Ganeshan, Leader of upcountry Tamil political party, Hon. Ranjith Madduma Bandara Secretary General of Samagi Jana Balawegaya the main opposition party and Hon. Charitha Herath from the ruling alliance;
- Our first Statement in all three languages highlighting the proposal brought forward by Hon. Namal Rajapaksa Minister of Sports & Youth, on LTTE prisoners’ release, and the support given by former Army Commander Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka and others - which was appreciated by embassies including US and Switzerland where Sidonia has asked for a meeting with us;
- Meeting with the Foreign Secretary Admiral Prof Jayanath Colombage on July 5, 2021, which was arranged by Mr. Hilmy Ahamed on a request by the Admiral. Rev. Bishop Asiri Perera & Mr. Hilmy Ahamed joining the Collective;
- Meeting with Hon. Namal Rajapaksa Minister of Youth and Sports on July 9, 2021 arranged by Ven Kalupahana Piyaratana. Mr. Rohana Hettiarachchi joining the Collective;
- Meeting with Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Foreign Minister, Hon Ali Sabry Minister of Justice and Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya State Minister of Regional Co-operation on July 13, 2021;
- Meeting with the President His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa on August 3, 2021;
• Zoom Meeting with Hon. Sajith Premadasa, the Leader of the Opposition organized by Dr. Dayani Panagoda on August 13, 2021. Former Ambassador Mr. Javid Yusuf joined the Collective;
• Meeting with Hon. Basil Rajapaksa Minister of Finance organized by Ven Kalupahana Piyaratana on August 20, 2021;
• Meeting with UN Resident Coordinator Madam Hanaa Singer and her team on August 25, 2021.
• Meeting with UNHCR members who are based in Geneva on September 2nd 2021 with 2 members of SLCC Dr Jehan Perera and Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa
• Meeting with the new foreign minister Hon. G. L. Peiris on September 8th 2021
• Meeting with Hon. Minister of Public Security Mr. Sarath Weerasekara on October 6th 2021
• Meeting with the Presidential commission of inquiry on October 13th 2021
• Dialogue chaired by Foreign Minister Hon. Prof G.L. Peiris on October 21st 2021
• Meeting with Office for National Unity and Reconciliation on November 2nd 2021
• Meeting with Office for reparations on November 2nd 2021
• Meeting with the Canadian High Commission on November 15th 2021
• Meeting with the Ministerial subcommittee to revisit the PTA act on November 27th 2021
• Meeting with the Dutch Ambassador on December 8th 2021
• Meeting with the Royal Norwegian Ambassador on December 13th 2021
• Meeting at the Ministry of Justice on SDG 16 on December 13th 2021

As a civil society collective we are committed to supporting the constructive actions of the government in taking the country towards peace, justice and reconciliation. At every meeting we had with government leaders we presented a written memorandum which outlined our concerns in the belief that they would be considered and a start would be made to addressing them.

Apart from the above, periodic zoom meetings were held with the members of SLCC
SUCCESS STORIES

- Our meeting with the government has enabled a shift in the thinking of the H.E President and Sri Lankan Government on Reconciliation, specifically His Excellency’s meeting in New York with UN General Secretary where he mentioned the meeting with us and his address at the UNGA and also the Foreign Minister’s statement at UNHRC Geneva.
- They have invited us to be consultants on reconciliation and SDG16 Peace, Justice & Strong institutions
- Reparation policy has been approved by the government on 17th August, after our interaction with Hon. Minister of Justice Mr. Sanjeewa Wimalgunarathna, member of SLCC – “According to the office for reparations act, There should be a Reparation policy after consultation of Victim Groups (Aggrieved Persons). Office for Reparations had done consultations in 11 Districts and they finally came with the National Reparations policy on 19th May 2020. But the cabinet has not passed it. During our intervention with the Hon. Minister of Justice, I asked about the status of it. He said he received it and he will be looking to get approval from the cabinet. It has been approved at the 17th August Cabinet meeting”
- “All Tamil political prisoners will be released soon” – Hon. Minister Namal Rajapaksa Virakesari, Thinakkural Newspaper
  Minister of Youth and Sports Hon. Namal Rajapaksa stated that H.E President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has taken measures to release all Tamil political prisoners soon. He added that those who have been held for crimes they had committed without their knowledge will be released soon.
- Government now is using the word “Dialogue” instead of meeting
- Bringing the NGO secretariat under the Foreign Ministry (Earlier was under the Defense Ministry)
- Ven Kalupahana Piyarathana Thero member of SLCC appointed to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka as a commissioner
- When SLCC met with the ministerial subcommittee on November 27, a case involving ten persons arrested under the PTA was highlighted by us as an example of unfair detention and remand. We are pleased that on December 8, the 10 persons who were being legally represented in the court by one of our members were granted bail after 7 months in remand. This was at the Magistrate’s Court Valaichchenai on the instructions and recommendation of the Attorney General’s office. As we had taken this case as an example during our discussion, the release of the detainees from remand may be a coincidence or consequence of SLCC’s discussion. In either event we are happy that this has been done.

SLCC have been able to capture the headlines of leading newspapers for the past 6 months
TWO DAY CONSULTATION WITH 15 KEY CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS TO VALIDATE THE “THE PLURALISTIC & DIVERSE NATURE OF THE REPUBLIC” DOCUMENT BEFORE SHARING

The consultation workshop took place on the 10th & 11th of March 2021 at Amaya Hills, Kandy, Session 1: Refreshing on constitutional proposals made – Facilitated by Dr. Jehan Perera
Session 2: Adding new elements and identifying key issues for purposes of advocacy – Facilitated by Dr. P. Saravanamuttu
Session 3: Devising advocacy strategy and modes of taking to the target groups – Facilitated by Dr. Dayani Panagoda
Session 4: Building civil society consensus on the ground - Academic and Development sector perspectives – Facilitated by Dr. Joe William and Dr. T. Jayasingham
The key civil society actors met at National Peace Council on the 23rd March 2021 to discuss about the East visit to be headed by Ven. Kalupahana Thero.
Zoom calls with Awakened citizens

We also convened zoom meetings with the participants of 2020 People to people dialogue series who now call themselves “Awakened citizens” who come from all parts of the country and all ethnic and faiths, who are academics, professionals, civils society leaders, women leaders and youth.
Host of Webinars

Four zoom webinars were held to raise public awareness about the different ways in which religions in Sri Lanka contributed to relieving the problems caused by the pandemic.

These webinars were carried out to promote interfaith collaboration in responding to not only to the ongoing public health crisis in Sri Lanka but also to build religious harmony thereafter.

**Scope of the webinars:** Mobilization of religious doctrines for promoting mutual understanding, mutual support and humanitarian response, role of religious leaders in promoting vaccine uptake and compliance with health guidelines, interfaith collaborations during the pandemic.

These webinars were hosted by Association of War Affected Women together with Awakened Citizens. We had simultaneous translations from Sinhala to Tamil and Tamil to Sinhala. We also livestreamed the webinar on Facebook. We had civil society actors, professionals, university academics and students as participants of the webinar.

**Webinar on Interfaith community contribution during the COVID – 19 Pandemic in Sri Lanka held on Thursday 16th September 2021 from 5.00 pm to 7.20 pm**

There were 8 religious leaders of all faiths as panelists of the webinars. They were participants of 2020 ICAN funded People to People dialogue series.

1. Ven. Kalupahana Piyaratana Thero
   Convenor- Inter Religious Alliance for National Unity. Chairman of Human Development Edification Center. Has been working for peace, reconciliation, human rights and ecology for more than 25 years.

2. Ven. Bhikkhuni Kalaganwatte Padmananda
   Chief Priest and Deputy Principal of Sri Chandrodaya Bilingual Educational institute. Holds a degree from Buddhist and Pali University.

3. Siva Sri V. K.Sivapalan Kurukkal
   President of White Peacock Organization, Batticaloa

4. Brammasri Somasundaram Thiyagarajah Kurrukkal
   Thillaiyadi Sri Muthumariyamman Temple. President of All Ceylon United Hindu Priests Society, Puttalam.

5. Rev. Fr. Mahesh Hemachandra
   Diocese of Kurunagala. Church of Ceylon. (Anglican Church)

6. Rev. Fr. P. Dileep Eranda
   Fr. P. Dileep Eranda, a Catholic priest working in the Diocese of Anuradhapura.
Presently working as the Administrative Secretary of the Diocese and Secretary to the Bishop as well. Also the Secretary to the National commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Ecumenism in the Catholic Church. Academic qualifications: Bachelor of Philosophy and Theology in Rome.

7. Moulavi M. Y. Hathiyathullah (Nathvi, SLPS)
Secretary of United Religious Initiative, Trincomalee

8. Moulavi A.A. Azwar
Secretary of Inter Religious Forum, Ampara. Working as a Muslim cultural officer

Prof. Kalinga Tudor Silva, Professor Emeritus, University of Peradeniya was the moderator
Webinar on Good practices of religious leaders during the pandemic held on Thursday 23rd September 2021 from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm

During this webinar the findings of the research carried out by the University of Peradeniya on good practices of local religious leaders during the Covid19 pandemic in Sri Lanka were explained in detail by the following panelists using presentations.

1. Prof. Tudor Silva, Professor Emeritus, University of Peradeniya – Introduction and the Progressive Changes in Buddhism
2. Dr. Ramesh Ramasamy, Senior Lecturer (Political Sc), University of Peradeniya - Explained about the Humanitarian Interventions by Faith Actors
3. Dr. Nafeel Zawahir, Senior Lecturer (Arabic & Islamic Studies) - Explained about vaccine Hesitancy in Eastern Sri Lanka
4. Ms. Sarah Arumugam Attorney at Law - Explained about the Use of Digital Platforms for Unleashing Hate
Webinars on “How to deal with the pandemic – What our religions say”

We conducted two webinars with 4 religious leaders of all faith in each webinar. What each religion say about pandemics, how they contribute to combat the pandemic were mainly highlighted in these webinars. These webinars did bring out the fact that the core of all religions is very similar. One was held on 27th September from 6.30 to 8.00 pm & the other on 29th September from 6.30 to 8.00 pm.
ONE DAY WORKSHOP WITH 10 ACADEMICS IN KANDY ON WAYS & MEANS OF POPULARIZING “THE PLURALISTIC & DIVERSE NATURE OF THE REPUBLIC” TO BE SHARED WITH LEADERS OF DIVERSE SECTORS.

The one day consultation with academics on Civil Society Submissions to the new constitution drafting process was held on 10th Feb 2021 at Mahaweli Reach Hotel, Kandy from 9 am to 5 pm.

The main purpose of the workshop was to discuss the ways and means of popularizing “The Pluralistic & diverse nature of the republic” and gain support for drafting a document based on the 2020 civil society contribution to the constitution making to be shared with leaders of diverse sectors.
ONE DAY WORKSHOP TO SELECT THE AREAS TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH AND DISCUSS ABOUT THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

One day workshop to determine the research areas and methodologies was held on 5th Feb 2021 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy. Here the participants were clearly made aware of the research objectives.

ONE DAY WORKSHOP ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Was held on 26th February 2021 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy to go in depth on the research methodologies, the questions to be included in the questionnaire for the research on government service delivery was discussed.
A key finding in the 2020 “PEOPLE TO PEOPLE DIALOGUE TOWARDS SOCIAL COHESION” was that in areas where predominantly one ethnic group lives that borders another province/district where another ethnic community lives, there can be challenges to government service delivery, which can lead to conflict. On the effectiveness of governance service delivery which creates tensions & conflicts which can be elevated to armed struggles in future, hence we wanted to carry out a field research to study the relationship between government service delivery and conflict, and possible solutions, because one ethnic or religious group may not have access to a service that another group does. From the information gathered, we drafted an outcome document which could be used to advocate and lobby for change of systems of service delivery to make it more accessible and equitable.

1. Batticaloa

The first four day field research to Batticaloa district took place from 25\(^{th}\) to 28\(^{th}\) March 2021. Places visited: Mangalama, Pullimalai, Pulukunawa – Keviliyamadu, Ganapathipuram

**Mangalama** is a Sinhala village situated in Batticaloa district where the people had to travel more than 70 kilometers to the Divisional Secretariat Division of Chenkaladi for their basic services. This village inhabitants were predominately home guards and they also did a little agriculture. Their biggest issue was water for cultivation and they also had solutions. They wanted the ancient tanks rebuilt and regular water supply for their cultivation. This village since the people were organized, they managed to obtain their services from the Divisional Secretariat through a known person in the Secretariat. They also do have a Grama Sevaka (the lowest level of Government Service Delivery Officials) who is Sinhalese.
**Pullimalai** is a village comprised of plantation sector Tamil population who have left the plantations of Monaragala District and have come and settled. Most of the inhabitants have been displaced several times. This village is unique because though they speak the same language, since they are plantation workers, they have difficulty in obtaining their services.

**Pulukunawa** is comprised of 50 Sinhala families who were brought in during the war time as assistants to the Armed forces. The houses were built by the military. They were initially given two acres of cultivable land and quarter acre for the house garden by Ampara District Secretariat. This village doesn’t have a Grama Niladhari the person who is taking care of their service delivery has to take care of another 3 villages and he is a Tamil speaking person. For their service delivery they have to travel more than 70 kilometers to the Divisional Secretariat in Pattipola.
**Ganapatipuram** - The people here are Tamil speaking and they were given a housing scheme. They are farmers, living adjoining an ancient archeological site and has the Government Service delivery entities within the village. They also have to travel 70 kilometers to Pattipola Divisional Secretariat.

---

**2. Vavuniya**

The second four day field research to Vavuniya took place from 15th to 18th July 2021.

Places visited: Vengala Chettikulam Menik Farm, Aandiyapuliyanakulum, Valavaithakulam, Rankethgama, Varikuttioor

**Vengala Chettikulam, Menik Farm**

Menik Farm is located between Vavuniya and Mannar in the Vavuniya District in the Northern Province. The original habitants of this village are mainly people of Tamil origin from the southern part of Sri Lanka, these people have migrated to these areas for various reasons.

People are relocated / resettled without a proper plan, long term strategies were not adopted.

Increase of Female headed households is a new social situation, it has created diverse challenges to women, young women including children.

Lack of livelihood opportunities has created poverty and vulnerable communities.

Issue of smuggling drugs and youth getting addicted to drugs. There were serval attempts taken by the villages to inform the police, it was not successful due to the lack of support of police the attempts have failed.

Unemployment is a major reason for the addiction, there are no employment opportunities around Chettikulam such as industries or other employment initiatives.

Safe drinking water and water for cultivation remains as one of the main issues, people have to pay Rs.3/- per liter for drinking water. Water supply systems are not in place to support cultivations.
Unemployment is a major challenge, Due to multiple displacement education was interrupted therefore there is an uneducated middle age generation, lack of educational standard further deprived them from securing employment opportunities. Lack of employment opportunities – there are no industries which generate employment the lack of development does not attract industries or companies. Therefore, many are seeking government jobs as that is the only available employment opportunity that they could see.

**Rankethgama, Varikuttiuru (Sinhala Village)**

A Sinhala village located in the northern part of Vavuniya. The main livelihood is cultivation and labour work. Historically people have lived in harmony despite their ethnic or religious diversity, it was not an issue at all. It demonstrates that there is no need to establish reconciliation in the traditional villages as they have been living together for many decades and co-existed well. The unfortunate events that unfolded in the country contributed towards disturbing the harmony and co-existence among the people. Compared to the older generation there is a gap between current Sinhala and Tamil generation. The elderly generation in the Sinhala village was able to communicate in Tamil, it enabled co-existence and peace. It was confirmed by a youth in the Tamil village, according to him, although older Sinhala generation was able to communicate well in Tamil language the current generation is not conversant in Tamil. However, it was observed that still there is a better connection between the communities, they communicate politely and there is potential to strengthen the relations.

**Common observations**

- It was evident that there are minority elements in both Menik Farm (Vengala Chettikulam (Tamil village), Andiapuliyanamul, Valavaithakulam (Muslim village)) and Varikurru (Rankethgama). Vulnerability is a common feature in both areas, most were in lower social status.
- Language issue was not identified as a major issue. Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim communities did not complaint regarding language as a barrier to access services. However, a villager from a Tamil village highlighted that there are major spelling mistakes on public name boards etc (in Hospitals).
- External connections contributed towards improving the living standard - Those who had better contacts and networks were able to rise above their situation and uplift their living standards, they gain social and economic status better than some families in the same location who have faced similar challenges. Those who had external support systems, network or families support were able to overcome their social challenges and acquired a considerable development.
- Issues related to accessing public services from Divisional Secretary or local government authorities were not identified as a major challenge. There were concerns regarding lack of officers to deliver services, however the villagers did not highlight overall public service as a failure.
- The issue of use of drugs were not highlighted in these villages.
There are many fertile lands which are abandoned, it can be used in a productive manner. Youth in these areas can benefit from the proper use of these lands.
Puttalam
The third field research to Puttalam took place from 5th to 8th Oct 2021
Places visited: Rathmalyaya, Kuwait Nagar, Attavilluwa, Vanathawilluwa Temple,
Karuwalagawesa,

Rathmalyaya
Rathmalayaya is a multi-ethnic community. Muslim, Tamil and Sinhala communities live in this area. Among the Muslim community there are IDPs from North, mainly from Mannar, and there are few from Jaffna. Main livelihood of the people in this community is daily wage employment and some are involved in business.

Kuwait Nagar
Kuwait Nagar was built in 2006 with the support of the Kuwait Embassy in Colombo, the project was coordinated by a leader in the community. 50 Muslim families were beneficiaries of this project. However due to the lack of facilities such as water, electricity and flooding during rainy seasons, many of the original beneficiaries leased these houses and acquired houses in the Alkasa city housing project. Currently only 06 original beneficiaries are still occupying the houses.

Issues
Lack of basic needs and facilities
Low economic status – Many are daily wage labourers or working in shops. It was observed that they are not skilled workers and unable to earn a proper income.
Public representatives are not responding to the needs of the locals.

Attavilluwa
Mainly Sinhala community live in this area. It appears that these people have migrated to this area from other locations. The first house was built in 1985 July. Many of them have adequate lands, they have “Jaya Bhoomi” deeds.

Issues:
Lack of public service
Public representatives are not reachable
Lack of basic facilities
Introduction of drugs to the local community -

Vanathavilluwa visit to Buddhiyangana Thero’s temple
Buddhiyangana thero have been involved in peace and reconciliation work since the early stages of the ethnic conflict. Many initiatives were spearheaded by the thero to promote social harmony in the community. Despite the fact that Puttlam is a multi-religious and Multi-ethnic community, the arrival of Muslim IDPs from North contributed towards creating unrest in the community. The efforts of the Thero along with wider civil society was able to handle the situation better. Apart from the local programmes, temple still continue a programme on Human Rights education
in collaboration with the Law faculty of University of Colombo. Many inter cultural and interfaith activities are carried out to enhance the understanding and tolerance among the communities. It has contributed immensely towards reconciliation and peace building.

Outcomes

- Proposal for the harmony center – creation of a center to accommodate all ethnic, religious and cultural activities toward promoting co-existence and harmony among communities.

Karuwalagaswewa

Karuwalagaswewa is a traditional village. Mainly a Sinhala community live in this area. Agriculture is the main livelihood.

General Observations

- Positive responses regarding peace and reconciliation – there were no reluctance of co-existing with other communities. An acceptance and recognition for building peaceful societies was demonstrated in the discussion with the common people.
- Communities are disappointed and strongly condemn the politicians – public has a very strong opinion that politicians are motivated only for political reasons and not interested in uplifting the lives of citizens.
- Public service – a dissatisfaction was demonstrated in the areas of accessing services from the public service. Lack transparency, inefficiency and politicization of the public service is criticized profoundly. Failures of public service system at many levels was emphasized by the local communities. They do not perceive the public service institutions as helpful institutions that assist the public.
3. Trincomalee
The fourth field research to Trincomalee took place from 26th to 29th Oct 2021
Places visited Welgama Viharaya, Pulikandikulam Gomarankadawala, Kurinchankulam, Namalwatte, Morawewa South (Gunawardanapura) , Shanthipuram Mahadivulwewa, Sungankuli, Kinniya

Velgama Viharaya
Velgama Raja Maha Viharaya has a history which runs back to two thousand years. According to historical inscriptions (sellipi) Vihara had its origins with King Devanampiyatissa planting a Bo plant in its premises. Inscriptions confirms that occasional renovations have been done by Kings such as Bathiya I, Agbo VI, Vijayabahu I, Parakrmabahu I, and Tamil King of Rajendra. During 11th century solee invaded the area. According to the chief monk at Welagama Viharaya, there are evidence that a Tamil King Rajendra had visited this place for worship and named a Kavol as Nathnar Kovil. There is inscription which is written in Tamil. After him it is believed that number of kings developed this place. Devanampiyatissa, Nissanka Malla, Bathiya, Sangabodhi , vijaba , parakbahu kings are some of them. The temple was rebuilt and developed during 1950s, by 1980s the village was, however with the LTTE attacks and impacts of the 30 years of the war village and the temple faced many challenges.

General observations
Tamil and Sinhala people co-existed –
- Shared same faith – The common ideology is that there are no Tamil Buddhist, the inscriptions which is written in Tamil confirms that there were Tamil Buddhists. It can be perceived that both Sinhala and Tamil communities engaged in their religious rituals together.
- Language is not a barrier – It appears that language is not an issue, Sinhala and Tamil people were able to communicate in both languages, they were free to work in both
languages. Even though currently many efforts being taken towards promoting language rights due to the deterioration of respect for language rights, it appears that in ancient times a due consideration was given for all the languages

- **Common inheritance** – inheritance for cultural and archeological sites were based on citizenship not on the basis of ethno-religious reasons.

Pulikandikulama, Gomarankadawala

**General observations / comments**

1. Both Tamil and Sinhala people have co-existed with better understanding – It was reported in ancient times elders were able to speak both languages. Many government officers and institutions and hospitals had Tamil officers - (Morawewa, Gomarankadawala, Kuchchiweli, Padavi Sri Pura D.S. Officers) no issue in accessing services, provided without discrimination. As many knew both languages there were less administrative issues. This confirms that there had been a better understanding and interaction among communities. During the ceasefire or decrease of war people use to return to their lands, among them elders are the first to return. This reflect that the understating between the communities were better and they trusted them. They knew that their neighbors will not do any harm to them. Also, it was reported that the elders could speak Tamil, it reflects the strong relationship with Tamil people. If they did not had any trust they wouldn’t have returned. Eg: It was reported that a Sinhala mother who returned to her land was in the paddy fields working, at that time a LTTE person came to that area and requested for some water and she had given him water, but they didn’t do any harm to her. It can be perceived that people had an understanding that the issue is between the state and the LTTE, but it’s not an issue with the Tamil and Sinhala community. There had been inter racial marriages. (Eg: inter racial marriages between people in gomarankadawala and kuchchiweli), the people’s connection at the ground level is evident.

2. Lack of reconciliation efforts – it was evident that old people had a better relationship with the Tamil communities whereas there is a trust deficit among the current 3rd generation who is young. It was reported that the 2nd and the 3rd generation still have fear psychosis towards Tamil people, especially among young children the war mentality is visible. Lack of state efforts working with these communities to create healing among communities were evident. It was reported that only the NGOs have worked on these issues and trying to empower the communities. NGOs such as Child Development Fund is working with a special focus on war affected children to address their inner healing issues and help them to think positively towards social-cohesion and also to bust myths about the wrong narratives which spoil the minds of children. Efforts related to transitional justice or educating people on TJ was not reported. They are not aware of such reconciliation mechanisms, this is a serious concern when the most affected communities
neglected in the transitional justice conversations and agenda it further the community divide which is a hindrance toward road to reconciliation.

3. Significant gaps in comprehensive reparation – The main focus only had been on resettling people back in their lands, however the plan and the process were not a well integrate once. The issue and challenges that this war affected communities face to date illustrates the situation well. The backward mentality of identifying them as marginalized communities is adding to show the gaps in reparation efforts. The communities still remain as underprivileged and continue their lived with many hardships.

Kurudugama (Kurinchankulama), Gomarankadawala

Lack of basic facilities and services

- Public transport system – adequate buses are not provided, mobility of people restricts accessing education and other services. People cannot afford to hire three wheelers as it is costly, therefore they are compelled to limit their needs.
- Health services – health services are not available in the village, people need to go to Gomarankadawala hospital which is not practical.
- Clean drinking water – people depend on limited water filters to fulfill their water needs.

Namalwatte

- People have co-existed and they wish to continue to live together- Eg: Sinhala people use to go the Hindu Kovil with their first harvest of paddy (Aluth Sahal) to boil the milk. When there are festivals in Kovil all communities used to participate. Even now Muslims help the Buddhist temple and make special contribution during festivals. People were talking about the Tamil people who used to live in these villagers and they wish if they return back to their lands. This reflects that these communities are happy to live together beyond their ethnic differences. it was reported and also observed that the Sinhala and Muslim community help them in transportation, those who have some personal vehicle they will help others.
- Muslim community have helped the Sinhala community to resettle in the villages. At the times when Sinhala community was reluctant to come back to the village, the Muslim community supported them to gradually resettle and start their lives. Eg: Muslim women giving shelter to Sinhala families in her house.
- Tamil people have been living here prior to 1983, as a result of riots they have left these villages. They never return back. The places of worship such as Kovils are abandoned.
Morawewa South (Gunawardanapura)

- Land issues - No ownership and clear tiles for the lands that they live more than 20 years
- No support from the government

It appears that recently also people have been brought from different areas by politicians and settled in these areas. It is observed that at the time of establishing the settlements, important assessments such as identifying forest / reservation lands or other suitable lands for habitation was not done. These lapses has created numerous disputes regarding land ownership and titles. Further this area was named as Gunawardanapura and it is a part of Seruwavila electorate.

Shanthipuram, Mahadivulwewa

Lack of reparation for victims – Tamils lost their houses during 1983, they did not receive adequate compensation. Initially the victims received around rs.30,000/- as a compensation, up to date they have not received any other support as a redress for their lost of properties or they were not able to access support through a proper mechanism to rebuild their lives. It appears that these people have found ways and means to meet their needs and have taken initiative to continue their livelihood in order to rebuild their live.

Land issue – politicians listened to the request of the original people in the village and allocated lands for them. This is a good trend especially in implementing development projects that prevents adverse impact on the original settlers in the villages. Many have their ownership and clear title deeds for the lands, also it was reported that Mahadivulweewa government officials are much honest, transparent and carry out their duties with due diligence to provide an efficient and effective service to the public. Further it was reported that contrastingly in Morawewa technical officer is not carrying out his duties effectively and transparently, people face many issues due to inefficient services of the government officers.

Social harmony can be promoted - People wish to live in harmony and expect that government services will be provided equitably to all its citizens without discrimination based on ethno-religious identity. There were intermarriages too.

Human connections are deeper than the ethnic divide - It was observed that their properties were damaged during the riots in 1983, but they were able to safeguard their lives. It was possible because of the connection they had with the Sinhala. It was evident that they lived with better understanding. Their human connection was deeper than political biases. Eg: A member of JVP informed Mr. Rajamony, regarding the plans to set fire to the houses of Tamil people. This information saved many lives.

Kallampatru, Kinniya,
Issues –
Discrimination – Muslim community experience discrimination in accessing services from government officers. They do not feel they are safe, it was reported that even police or any state authorities are not supportive and biased towards Sinhala people. Sinhala people are able to get their work done without issue or delay.

Land grabbing issues –

- During the displacement of Muslim people many lands belong to them were encroached by the Sinhala people and they still continue to occupy those lands and carry out their agricultural activities. Around 60% of the Muslim people have permits for these lands around 40% are still struggling to claim their lands. Their land issue matters are not been addressed by the authorities.

- When Muslim people clear the lands for cultivation, they are being penalized, the police arrest them, whereas Sinhala people carry out their cultivation without disruption, further they are being supported by the state authorities. Muslim people have many barriers in doing their farming while Sinhala community enjoy the lands without disturbance.

- Some lands in the Puliyankulama area that are being occupied by the Sinhala people come under the purview of Kinniya DS division, however their matters related to land such as issuing permits etc are being attended by the Kanthale DS division, hence they provide service only to Sinhala community and Muslims are not able get their land matters sorted by the authorities. Including their agricultural needs such as fertilizers and other service are being provided by the Kanthale DS Division.

- People from Kanthale are encroaching lands in Kinnya DS Division, They are able to acquire permits through Kanthale DS Division. There are around 436 Muslim families in these areas and only 240 people have permits for their lands, others are not able to get their permits owing to the discriminatory practices of the government authorities. Sinhala community do not face barriers or difficulties regarding their documentation work related to land matters, therefore they are able to continue their agriculture work smoothly.

- It appears that there is some invisible issue at the administrative level which needs urgent attention, the said areas fall under the administrative supervision of Kinniya DS, however it is not functioning according to the correct procedure.

Changing of demography – the situation regarding the land and other administrative functions in the Puluyankulam area is a clear indication of a hidden agenda of adding these areas under Kanthale DS division.

Lack of health services – There are no hospital or MOH in for the area, a clinic center has been built around 10 years ago, it is not functioning. People face many challenges in accessing health services, therefore if the clinic functions even twice a week many will be benefit.
Sungankuli, Kinniya

Reparation gaps - Resettlement is not done properly, a comprehensive resettlement plan was not in place, houses were built and people were settled without providing proper facilities. Rods are not constructed, schools are not functioning well, and there are plans to close down the existing school which was functioning for nearly 75 Years. Though there are Tamil language schools close by since the schools were Muslim schools, the Hindu children didn’t have access to them. No livelihood opportunities, it affects their economic status. Many people who returned have left the village due to lack of basic needs and facilities such water, electricity etc.

Compared to the Majeed Nagar it appears that Sungankuli village does not have adequate facilities and opportunities. The people who live here seems to be extremely poor.
3 DAY WORKSHOP TO PREPARE THE REPORT BASED ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS TO BE SHARED WITH THE GOVERNMENT & THE PUBLIC.

Held on 23rd, 24th & 25th November 2021 at Cinnamon Citadel Kandy. All the data and information collected during the research were analyzed and discussed in detail, the structure of the report was drafted and we came up with conclusions and recommendations.

The report is now available on the website
Report Title: “Access to Services, Identity Politics and Challenges for Social Harmony in the Sri Lankan Periphery”
ENHANCING WOMEN’S SKILLS ON MEDIATION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION FOR RECONCILIATION PROCESSES
Women Mediators across the Commonwealth
Funded by Conciliation Resources

Rapid training program on Negotiation and negotiation concepts, skills and attitudes
Held on 8th January 2021 Cinnamon Citadel Hotel, Kandy

Two day training on Process Design: Topics and links between tracks was held successfully on the 9th and 10th of January at Cinnamon Citadel Kandy
LAUNCH OF SRI LANKA WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORK
Women Mediators across the Commonwealth
Funded by Conciliation Resources

The launch of Sri Lanka Women Mediators Network was successfully held on Tuesday the 30th of March 2021 at Amaya Hills, Kandy from 10.00 a.m. to 02.00 p.m. High Court Judge Madam Kusala Sarojini Weerawardena graced the occasion as the chief guest. Influential dignitaries such as Hon. Governor, former minister of women, former minister of housing, parliament members, provincial council and local level women politicians, Members of SMART 75 and TEAM1325 attended the event.

Website link: https://swmnetwork.net/
GENDER JUSTICE AND SECURITY HUB
London School of Economics

AWAW conducted 12 interviews related to Return Migration. These interviews were carried out as a part of the Project 3 - GCRF Hub in order to examine the gendered return migration to post-conflict/conflicted regions, their motivations of return, expectation and experiences of return migration, to assess how gendered return migration can contribute to the local economy, to assess challenges related to return and resettlement and so on. The interviews were carried out in the month of March 2021.

UN PEACEBUILDING FUND
GNWP - UN Women

AWAW carried out interviews with few partners of UN Peacebuilding fund. The study aimed to explore the views and opinions of grassroots organisations on themes related to peacebuilding and women’s role in peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Fund wanted to find out more about what has been achieved, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations for future projects in this field. The interviews were carried out in the month of April 2021.

ESTABLISHMENT OF 25 WOMEN POLITICAL LEADER’S CAUCUSES

AWAW took leadership in establishing women leader’s caucuses in all 25 districts of Sri Lanka. We now have 25 active WhatsApp groups comprising of women leaders of diverse ethnic, religious and political affiliations.

SHE BUILDS PEACE CAMPAIGN – SRI LANKA
Funded by International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

“SHE BUILDS PEACE” campaign was held on Wednesday 3rd November 2021 at the peer committee districts namely Anuradhapura, Puttalam, Hambantota, Trincomalee and Monaragala and was held on Thursday 4th November 2021 at Kurunegala. AWAW visited the Anuradhapura campaign launch.

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/She-Builds-Peace-111206708027911/?ref=page_internal
YouTube page: https://youtube.com/channel/UCDYUzNWM0dn40yLQZ8_I3kQ
OUR COVID-19 RESPONSES...

- AWAW donated Rupees one million to the Kandy General Hospital on 20th May 2021 to be used for the purchase of essential equipment for the treatment of Covid-19 patients in Kandy Teaching Hospital
- Donation for distribution of dry rations for quarantined families

Other donations

- AWAW donated Rupees one hundred thousand for purchasing furniture and basic stationery items for a newly built preschool in Columbuthurai, Jaffna
- Donation was made towards the seminar which was held for the students of Kandy division police
GLOBAL INVOLVEMENTS

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, Chair of AWAW was a speaker at “Warfare & Peacemaking in the 21st Century: who’s taking responsibility to protect and promote peace?” Held on 19th January 2021 from 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm Sri Lankan time
Hosted by the Centre for Women, Peace and Security of London School of Economics

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, Chair of AWAW was a speaker in the virtual forum: From victims to activists for Justice and Peace: A transnational forum on generating justice in transition Held on 19th January 2021 from 9.30 pm to 11 pm Sri Lankan time
Organized by of Justicia, Derechos Humanos & Justicia, A.C. (JDHG) and SIWA: Artisans of Peace and Justice, with the invaluable support of ICAN’s Innovative Peace fund

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, chair of AWAW participated in the CSW Parallel event – SOAR with Women Peacebuilders: She builds peace campaign
Held on 23rd March 2021 at 6.30 pm SL time
Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa was a panelist: N Peace Hybrid Exhibition: Women, Peace & Security in an Era of Fragility
Held on 30th March 2021 at 4.30 pm SL time

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, chair of AWA W participated in the World Federation of United Nations Association’s monthly **CSO Dialogues with the President of the Security Council**, featuring Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière of France
Held on 6th July 2021 at 1.30 am to 2.30 am SL time

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, chair of AWA W was a Panel speaker at the South Asian Conference on “Solidarity for advancing WPS Agenda”
Held on 5th August 2021 from 10.45 am to 12.15 pm SL time

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, chair of AWA W was a panelist at the panel Women and Peacebuilding in South Asia
Held on 18th December 2021 from 5 pm to 6.30 pm Sri Lankan
Organized by WISCOMP
A Special thanks to our donors, for their generosity without which we would not have been able to continue our journey thus far.

Cheers,
Association of War Affected Women