ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN
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VISION

Peaceful Prosperous Sri Lanka where all its people 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.

CONTACT US

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ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN

Strengthening Good Governance and Democracy - Women Taking Leadership

The Association of War Affected Women in partnership with Global Communities proposed the implementation of the project “Strengthening Good Governance and Democracy: Women Taking Leadership” in Sri Lanka in key aim of reinforcing cooperative relationships across divides and to increase the participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes.

The project was implemented through working towards the advancement of women of all ages and all strata of life including women with special needs as well as women who are indigenous and living in rural as well urban areas. Also women were trained on women peace and security (WPS) agenda enabling them to take UNSCR 1325 to the grassroots so that they were able to mitigate conflicts at the community level and earn respect from the local population. They were able to enhance their ability to understand how to start initiatives and to organize implementation.

Activities that were carried out under this project in the year 2020 are:

- Two day in depth training on Building Social Harmony through Governance and Rights took place on 3rd & 4th January 2020 at Girithale Hotel, Polonnaruwa with 27 participants.
- Two day in depth training on Women’s Rights towards Social Cohesion & Reconciliation took place on 23rd & 24th January 2020 with 38 participants and 31st January & 1st February 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy with 24 participants.
- Four three day learning exchange visits Mulaitivu, Kilinochchi, Galle & Matara
- Advocacy Campaign “WE STAND UNITED FOR OUR COUNTRY” throughout the country in June & July 2020
ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN


Exchange Visit to Kilinochchi - 11th, 12th & 13th of March 2020

Exchange Visit to Galle – 18th, 19th & 20th of June 2020

Exchange Visit to Matara – 25th, 26th & 27th of June

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Advocacy Planning Meeting was held on 29th June 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy

Advocacy Review Meeting was held on 13th June 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy

Final Evaluation meeting was held on the 18th July 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy

“I can promise you that women working together- linked, informed and educated can bring peace and prosperity to this forsaken planet”

-Isabelle Allende-
The Road to Reconciliation in Sri Lanka – Through Resilience Building and Social Cohesion

Activities carried out under this project

- One day meeting in Kandy with 25 participants for consultation and evaluation
- 36 one-day peer committee meetings, 12 in each of the 3 selected districts Batticaloa, Mannar and Matale.
- 9 three day People to People dialogue towards Social Cohesion.
- Two 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 with the participation of key civil society representatives and university academics.
- Developing an outcome document with all the inputs of the people to people dialogue
- People to people dialogue conclusion meeting
ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN

Activities carried out by the peer committee members in Batticaloa, Mannar & Matale
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PEOPLE TO PEOPLE DIALOGUE TOWARDS SOCIAL COHESION

Phase 1: Trust building
Phase 2: Dialogue

Phase 3: Joint action – Reconciliation

Field Visit & dialogue in Jaffna
Field Visit & dialogue in Kandy

Field Visit & dialogue in Batticaloa
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Two day dialogue with key civil society members

Zoom meetings with the key civil society actors
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Proposals for Constitutional Reform submitted by members of the Dialogue Workshop held on November 18 and 19 in Kandy to the Expert Committee to Draft a New Constitution

A. NATURE OF THE STATE

1. The Constitution shall reflect and promote the social and cultural diversity of the country’s population in the nature of the State.
2. Sri Lanka shall be a multi ethnic, multi religious, multi lingual, multi-cultural and plural state.
3. A Constitutional Council shall be instituted as provided for in the 19th Amendment.
4. There shall be special provisions for minority protection on the lines of the Soulbury Constitution’s Section 29 (2) which rendered void any law or any part of a law that sought to restrict the free exercise of any religion or subject persons of any community or religion to disabilities or restrictions not imposed on other communities or religions.
5. While every effort is made to respect diversity, local traditions, and religious prescriptions, they need to be in accord with international standards that Sri Lanka has formally adopted.

E-H. THE EXECUTIVE, THE LEGISLATURE, ELECTIONS AND DEVOLUTION

6. A Constitutional Council shall be appointed as provided for in the 19th Amendment.
7. The Legislature shall consist of two tiers- a Parliament and a Senate.
8. Election to the Senate shall be 3 members from each province with 5 members to be appointed by the Constitutional Council to represent under-represented or unrepresented communities (eg. Malays, Burghers, Indigenous People etc.)
9. The President and two Vice Presidents shall be elected as a team by an Electoral College consisting of members of the Senate, Parliament and Provincial Councils. The number of members voting from the Provincial Councils will be 25 from each. The election of the President and Vice Presidents will require a 2/3 majority to ensure greater consensus. The two vice Presidents should be from the minority communities
10. Elections to Parliament, Senate and Provincial Councils shall take place concurrently.
11. All elections shall be for a fixed term. If the budget is defeated twice, the President shall call on the person most likely to command a majority to form the government for the remaining period.
12. All elections will be on a mixed member system. To ensure that there will be a minimum of 1/3 representation for women from constituencies and there will be a closed (appointed) national list where every other candidate will be a woman.
13. The Provincial Council system will be strengthened and non-executive Governors will be appointed by the Constitutional Council. The Governors will assent to Provincial Council legislation.

14. The Provincial Councils shall run for their full term. However, there will be provision for suspension or dissolution of a Provincial Council in special circumstances.

15. The National Police Commission shall be tasked with recruiting all police personnel, and also the training and appointing personnel above the rank of SSP. The national police may also act in case of local emergencies.

16. Training and appointments of police personnel below the rank of SSP shall be done by Provincial Councils. Transfers and other administrative matters will be placed under the Provincial Public Service Commissions.

17. The Constitutional Council will propose three names to head the police in the Provincial police force. The Chief Minister shall select one person who will be appointed by the governor.

18. Land powers shall be devolved to the Provincial Councils with the exception of the forest and wild life reservations and sea coast which will vested with the central government. Where the Central Government requires land for national projects, the Provincial Council shall collaborate with it.

19. The principle of subsidiarity will be given priority in which matters are handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority.

20. Taxes and revenues shall be shared between the Central Government and Provincial Councils on a rational and just basis that make the regions more attractive for investment and provincial development.

I. OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST

21. There shall be a Pluralism and Diversity Commission. In particular the commission will be mandated to work on issues that are identified in the fundamental rights chapter of the constitution.

22. A 5-member Commission shall be appointed by the Constitutional Council and be representative of the country’s ethnic and religious diversity.

23. The Pluralism and Diversity Commission shall be mandated to propagate the idea of pluralism in society, to have an annual plan that includes civic education and be encouraged to be creative and far thinking in energetically engaging on issues that bind the communities.

24. The Pluralism and Diversity Commission shall have the power to conduct its own inquiries, give directives to be implemented and to take issues to the courts through the Attorney General.

25. The Pluralism and Diversity Commission shall have a regional presence with its own offices in the regions. It will work closely with any government agency working on issues that come under the commission’s purview.

26. The Pluralism and Diversity Commission shall be empowered to refer any proposed law to the Supreme Court with its observations.
Developing an outcome document with all the inputs of the People to People dialogue series to share with academic institutions and all relevant stakeholders.

People to people dialogue towards Social Cohesion – Conclusion meeting held on 14th & 15th December 2020 at Habarana Village, Habarana.
The launch of the campaign “SHE BUILDS PEACE” was held on 29th of May 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Anniwatte, Kandy with 30 participants. Amidst Covid19, we were able to carry out the event very successfully.

Three one day workshops on Sustainable Development Goals for men & women of the plantation sector were held successfully on

- 11th of September at Ceybank Rest, Nuwara Eliya with 20 participants
- 3rd of October at Castlereagh Resort, Hatton with 22 participants
- 31st of October at Riverdale Hotel Kandy with 20 participants

The aim of these workshops was to highlight the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for Sri Lanka and walk towards it with the contribution from all segments and sectors of the society.

Localizing SDG 16 Plus - Women taking leadership
Funded by GPPAC

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Localizing SDG 16 Plus - Women taking leadership
Funded by GPPAC
Gender Justice and Security Hub
Funded by the London School of Economics

The scope of the project is to build Social harmony through series of activities on women’s economic empowerment as well their awareness of new & emerging threats identified in accordance with the ground situation and political environment. The main aim of this project is to bring rural women together across the divide to work together for a prosperous economy & build a shared future.

A two day training session was held on the 10th & 11th of January 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy where Ms. Neelam Raina & Ms. Zahra Hussain discussed about the fieldwork pack during the session.

Focus group meeting was conducted in Batticaloa on the 15th & 16th of February with the craft women of Batticaloa and production centers were visited.

Focus group meeting was held in Mannar on 22nd & 23rd February 2020 to meet the craft women of Mannar and production centers were visited.
Meeting to meet the focus group of Kandy was held on the 13th of June 2020 at Riverdale Hotel, Kandy from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Enhancing Women’s Skills on Mediation and Conflict Transformation for Reconciliation Processes
Women Mediators across the Commonwealth
Funded by Conciliation Resources

A two day residential training on Gendered Conflict Analysis and Conflict Transformation was held very successfully on 5th & 6th December 2020 at Mahaweli Reach Hotel Kandy

A two day residential training on Negotiation and Mediation concepts, skills and attitudes was held very successfully on 9th & 10th of December 2020 at Mahaweli Reach Hotel, Kandy.

LSE Middlesex – Visiting AWAW 9th January 2020
COVID 19 RELATED ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN
FUNDED BY INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ACTION NETWORK (ICAN)

Sri Lanka has more than 4 to 5 million people who are depending on daily or weekly money for living, apart from the daily laborers. People are going to be hit very hard no salaries as well no way of earning money. AWAW started to carry out very small scale relief programme through our women leaders, mainly to plantation sector with food, milk for children and also special needs for women and girls using ICAN Bridge funding. The women select the families who are in dire need and distribute the essentials.

We also had requests from the Police for PPE equipment so that when they take people for quarantine their offices are protected. We provided them 280 PPEs for the entire Kandy division.
“Protecting Women Peacebuilders: How to secure the frontline of a Global Movement for Inclusive Peace & Sustainable Peace”

Workshop organized by International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) & the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was held on 11th & 12th February 2020 in London.

Meeting the Dutch Ambassador in Sri Lanka on 6th February 2020

International Webinar on Public Health, Women’s Agency and Peacebuilding:

Women’s Rights, Recognition and Protection during COVID19 Pandemic

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, Chair of AWAW was a Keynote speaker based on the theme ‘Inclusive Public Health, Gender Impact and Stakeholders Role: A Global Perspective’ held on Saturday 8th of August 2020 from 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. organized by Yakjah Reconciliation and Development Network in collaboration with The Law School, University of Jammu and International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN).
Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, chair of AAW was a speaker in the Regional Session that the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies hosted during the E-Conference on "Local Women Voices for Peace and Security in South Asia" on Wednesday, September 23, at 11 am Colombo time. This was hosted in honor of the 20th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325.

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa was a speaker at the launch of ICAN’s New brief: Protecting Women Peacebuilders: The Frontlines of Sustainable Peace held on Friday 23rd of October 2020

Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, facilitated the training session on Transitional Justice – part of the training seminar on Gender Responsive and inclusive mediation organized by International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) & Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) members held on 16th December 2020 at 7.30 p.m. SL time
Ms. Visaka Dhardamasa, Chair of AWAW was featured in the Forbes article “Women Peace Builders Are Essential for Sustainable World Peace” written by Jackie Abramian


Collaborations with first responders aware of “humanitarian corridors, able to negotiate access, and who know the real needs of the Yemeni population.”

Visaka Dhardamasa, Founder of Sri Lanka’s Association for War Affected Women (AWAW) knows, “No one funds anything for nothing—it is how best we use the funding that matters, but some donor agencies can ruin countries’ agriculture, health systems, etc., so we have to be very careful in those areas.”

International aid can negatively hinder locally sustainable socio-economic opportunities, leading to aid dependence—elevating the rich, further oppressing the poor, and fueling corruption cycles. In his Guardian article, Haiti and The Failed Promise of US Aid, Jacob Kushner investigated failures of foreign aid to Haiti over four decades of Hillary and Bill Clinton’s involvement in “combining foreign aid with diplomacy.”

“While local NGOs lack resources and funds for major projects, large aid organizations don’t necessarily always succeed,” ICAN’s Program Director, Innovative Peace Fund, France Bogan says INGOs’ cumbersome grant application process hinder local NGOs’ funding because of their limited resources.
WE THANK ALL OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS FOR A SUCCESSFUL AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR

ICAN
USAID - Global Communities
London School of Economics
GPPAC
WMC – Conciliation Resources
AWAW Team
Wishes you a
Merry Christmas
and a
Peaceful
Prosperous New Year!