



Vision

The establishment and protection of a just, equitable and peaceful society

Mission

To collectively promote peace, reconciliation and human rights, sharing responsibility, resources and risks through strategic partnerships with civil society, public sector, business community, diaspora, academia and donors

How we are helping the community

Assisting victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV)

Through the Eastern Social Development Foundation (ESDF), NTT has been supporting the work of the GBV Desk located at the Valaichenai Base Hospital in Batticaloa district since 2010, with the aim of encouraging its incorporation as part of the hospital, as is the case of GBV Desks in other district hospitals.

The Desk functions as the hub of the GBV network in Valaichenai. It acts as a referral mechanism within the hospital to disseminate awareness on SGBV and child abuse among government bodies, NGOs, and the community. Medical treatment is provided by the hospital while for non-medical complaints it refers SGBV victims to the relevant authorities.

The Desk initiated DNA testing to determine paternity which has helped women file action in courts successfully claim financial support and maintenance.

The GBV desk officer based at the hospital is very often called to be the resource person at workshops organized for members of the district level GBV Network, which comprises the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs, Government Agent,/Director of Planning, Kalkudah Divisional Secretariat, child rights protection officers, probation officers,

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A network meeting on SGBV issues

zonal education authorities, Samurdhi officers, women development officers, social service officers, police officers, legal/mediation board/quazi courts, divisional CSOs and women's rights networks, NGOs and INGOs. The increase in the number of SGBV cases reported to the desk compared to the previous years, shows that efforts to increase awareness among rural communities has been successful.

Recognition of the valuable work of the Desk is evident from the relationships it has built with local government bodies. Three years since NTT began supporting this initiative, the stakeholders have undertaken to organize the monthly network meetings at various government premises such as police stations, at the Divisional Secretariat and the Child Probation Office using their own resources.

The Desk was felicitated for its valuable services on the occasion of the local Women's Day celebrations.

During a visit to the hospital, officials from the Family Health Bureau (FHB) expressed their appreciation of the work done by the Desk. The Bureau has also reviewed the 'Incident Reporting' formats designed as part of this project and have printed and distributed the same for use by other SGBV desks in the country. The FHB, under whose remit the work of the GBV Desk falls, has agreed to supervise the activities of the GBV Desk.

As part of NTT's capacity building initiative, we provided a fellowship to the caseworker of the GBV Desk to participate in a course in Sri Lanka on 'Gender & Development' organized by the New Delhi-based organization Sangat, together with EKTAResource Center for Women & Affected Women's Forum in Sri Lanka.

The work of the GBV desk was introduced as one of the successful models that effectively addresses SGBV through provision of services to victims to receive, document and respond to incidents, awareness

creation as well as the establishment of strong networks with its stakeholders.

Eastern Social Development Foundation (ESDF) was established in 2010 with seed funding from NTT to address the increasing needs of those who were affected by gender based violence in Koralaipattu in Batticaloa District to provide better services to the victims.

NTT's financial assistance has contributed to the establishment of a sustainable structure which effectively addresses issues related to sexual gender based violence in the district.

This structure has now been pronounced as one of the best working models by both government and non-governmental organisations.

How we are helping the community

Digital story telling in Uva Province promotes diversity



A series of tri-lingual workshops on script writing and production of digital stories for students from Badulla Central College, Saravathy Tamil MV and Al-Adhan Muslim MV was conducted in the Uva province.

6 students from each of the 3 communities (Muslim, Sinhala and Tamil) – 8 girls and 10 boys, participated in the programme which sought to promote cultural sensitivity and pluralism amongst youth.

Participants learnt to write short stories, prepare story boards, take photos and videos, use photo and video editing software tools, record and edit voice and create videos. In total, 10 digital stories were produced by participating youth.

The Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum, which conducted the programme, has created a web portal to enable students to continue their interactions with each other. This website also provided space for youth from Northern Sri Lanka who participated in our previous programme, which culminated in the production of radio dramas to promote pluralism, to connect with youth from the Uva province.

Materials are available at: <http://www.ldjf.org/>.



One participant said:

"... we did not have a chance to work with Sinhalese and Muslims. This was a great opportunity for us to understand their cultures and religions. I hope we can live peacefully without any misunderstanding".

How we are helping the community

Literature in digital format



NTT provided financial support to Noolaham Foundation to create digital copies of Tamil literature and other documents and post them online to a global Tamil readership. The publications include works of fiction and non-fiction from eminent writers such as Jinnah Sherifdeen, Prof S. Pathmanathan (Encyclopedia volumes on Hinduism), S. Sutharsan and

Theniyana. Our support has enabled the foundation to add 262 books (over 31,000 pages) to its free online library. Go to <http://www.noolaham.org> for more information on this contribution to preserving new and old literature in electronic format for a wide audience comprising students, teachers, researchers, activists, historians and the general public.

Noolaham Foundation is a non-profit, charitable organization founded to provide enhanced access to information sources and foster knowledge-based development in Sri Lanka. It seeks to preserve and protect through documentation and archiving various aspects of the society, culture and politics of Tamil speaking communities in the island of Sri Lanka.

Women's fellowship programme: Residential Programme on Gender & Development

The pilot phase of NTT's Women's Fellowship Programme concluded with the participation of four fellows in a ten-day residential programme on Gender & Development organised by Sangat (based in New Delhi, India), EKTA & AWF. The programme was held from 20 February to 1 March 2013 in Batticaloa in the Eastern

Province of Sri Lanka. Themes discussed at the training included introduction to concepts of patriarchy, gender, masculinity, femininity, feminism, women's movement, and the present neoliberal paradigm of development and its impact on poverty and gender.

Alternatives to this paradigm of development, sexual and reproductive health, politics of body, mental and emotional health, violence against women and violence in general, militarization, identity politics, conflict transformation and peace, UDHR & CEDAW as instruments to protect & promote women's rights and feminist training methodologies were also

discussed. The programme enabled the Fellows to engage in dialogue and share experiences with, and learn from community activists, development practitioners, trainers and women's studies scholars. This increased their understanding and awareness of, and sensitivity to a range of issues related to gender, peace, development, social justice and human rights.

Participation in the programme increased their self-confidence, enhanced their analytical and communication capacities and strengthened their networking and ability to collaborate for advocacy and action.

14th NEELAN TIRUCHELVAM MEMORIAL LECTURE

“The law, this violent thing”: dissident memory and democratic futures

Dr Vasuki Nesiah, Associate Professor of Practice, New York University (NYU) delivered the annual memorial lecture titled “*The law, this violent thing*”: *dissident memory and democratic futures* to a packed audience.

The event was chaired by Ms. Radhika Coomarasamy, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

Dr Nesiah based her lecture on two classical texts - the Tamil epic *Silapathikaram* and the Greek play *Antigone* - to explore themes of dissent, transitional justice and the politics of pluralism. Dr Nesiah’s use of these texts is significant as they were to have been used by Dr Neelan Tiruchelvam in a course he was due to teach at Harvard Law School in the autumn of 1999. At the time Dr Nesiah was assisting Dr. Tiruchelvam with the preparation of course materials for the course on constitutions, civil rights, and justice struggles. These two texts were included in a bid to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective and venture beyond the standard law school course material.

For Dr Nesiah, *Antigone* brings out the Democratic Paradox, “the tension between the notion of democracy as a “form of government” and “democracy as a form of social and political life” and has “an enduring hold on our imagination of justice”.

According to her, *Antigone*’s “great power is its ability, in Greek fashion, to be a Trojan horse for dissident political sentiment wherever it is performed. In places where communities have been refused a right to mourn their dead, *Antigone*



has been a way to claim that right. In places where states have declared a hierarchy of loss that includes both privileged and dispensable victims, *Antigone* has been a way to claim a radical equality in death. In places where some lives have been declared ungrievable, *Antigone* has been a way to express that grief. In places where the aftermath of a civil war has been used to consolidate a ruler’s power, *Antigone* has been a way to contest the legitimacy of that authority. In places where a war’s victors have claimed an Orwellian right to declare an official truth and underwrite a new technology of control, *Antigone* has been a way to resist and revolt. In places where minority traditions have been thrown outside the city’s gates and condemned as a threat to the nation, *Antigone* has been a way to open those gates and reclaim the city. In places where dissent remains hesitant and underground, a whispered current, *Antigone* becomes a way to articulate protest.” It framed her thinking “about the post-war social contract—from dissident memory to democratic futures, about how we mourn the dead and live with our differences.”

The full text of the lecture is available at http://neelan.org/pdf/final_vasuki_nesiah_nt_memorial_lecture.pdf.

Printed copies are available at the Trust office. Do contact us for a copy. Summaries of the lecture are also available in Sinhala and Tamil on our website.

Networking

Founder Trustee Sithie Tiruchelvam and Programme Manager R. Kohilanath attended the Foundations for Peace Network (FfPN) meeting in Hyderabad, India earlier this year. One of the highlights of the two-day event was a presentation on 'Enhanced Use of Social Media' by non-profit organisations.

Chairperson Ambika Satkunanathan represented and shared the work of FfPN at the European Foundation Centre's annual conference held in Copenhagen in May 2013 on "Sustainable Cities: Foundations and Our Urban Future". She also attended the Network's AGM held in Belgrade in October 2013 at which a new organisation from Indonesia, Indonesia for Humanity (IKA) became a member of the Network.

While in Belgrade, FfPN members also visited the offices of Women in Black, a peace organisation that works on post-war issues with women of many communities. NTT is a founding member of FfPN.

Executive Director Jacqueline Netto attended an Asia Community Philanthropy Peer Learning and Exchange programme in Shillong, India, convened by the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) and Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace (PSJP). It was attended by 16 organisations from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam and facilitated by Chandrika Sahai of PSJP and Barry Knight of CENTRIS UK (see related article Grassroots Foundations from South Asia and South East Asia Convene in India on page 7).

Welcome to our new Trustee!

NTT is very pleased to welcome Ms Shehara de Silva to the Board of Trustees.

Ms De Silva is a communications and branding specialist with experience in strategic planning, awareness generation and competitiveness consultancy. She has worked in advocacy, behavior change, and communication on social and development issues including fundraising. She combines a unique mix of experience in public, private, local, multinational and multilateral environments. Ms De Silva is currently General Manager Sales and Marketing at Janashakti Insurance.

Rest in peace

Staff and trustees condoled with the family of Mr Lanka Nesiah, Trustee, who passed away in August. Nesiah was a Trustee from July 2010 and Chair of the Finance and Investment Committee (FIC), before his retirement due to ill-health. He was a motivator and a source of quiet strength, and his contribution to the larger cause of promoting and campaigning for social justice will be sorely missed.

Grassroots Foundations from South Asia and South East Asia Convene in India

From 10-11 September 2013) the Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace and the Global Fund for Community Foundations convened a small group of grassroots indigenous foundations in Shillong in the North East of India. The convening was hosted by the Foundation for Social Transformation – Enabling North East India and included foundations from India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia.

The convening aimed to provide a platform to these foundations to learn from one another to strengthen their organisational capacities and work as a group to develop community philanthropy for progressive social change in Asia.

The foundations that participated in the convening are diverse in many ways – they describe themselves as women's funds, community foundations, peace funds, social justice funds and each of them operates in its shifting and specific country context.

However, despite the diversity there are a number of fundamental commonalities that are apparent in the cohort, both in their values and in their strategies. They all work in societies that face social, economic and political inequalities and with groups that are unfairly marginalized and discriminated against; and they all work for fundamental social transformation that would address the drivers of inequality and conflict.

In their strategies they are driven by the belief that “communities come up with the best solutions to the problems they face”. Their core agenda is therefore to build on and leverage community assets to address the needs of the communities they serve.

At a time when philanthropy in South Asia and South East Asia is growing rapidly, the conversations at the convening urged the need for, and importance of informing and influencing the new philanthropic discourse by the common values of this cohort and others like them. There was also recognition that in order to be heard they needed to leverage their collective voices and speak from a position of strength.

In the coming months we will be working together to define the “value-added” of this emerging breed of organisations in Asia and strengthen our interpersonal connections so that we speak as a collective voice to shape the way mainstream philanthropy operates.

Organisations that participated in the Shillong Convening: Tewa (Nepal), South Asia Women's Fund (Sri Lanka), Bangladesh Women's Foundations, Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (Pakistan), Charkha (India), Simag Foundation (Philippines), Social Trust Fund (Indonesia), Nirnaya (India), Bangladesh Women's Fund (Bangladesh), Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust (Sri Lanka) i-Partner India (India), Sampradaan Indian Centre for Philanthropy (India), Lin Center for Community Development (Vietnam), Local Development Institute (Thailand), Dalit Foundation (India), Foundation for Social Transformation – enabling north east India (India)

Source: <http://www.p-sj.org>

Thank you for partnering with us in re-building a just, equitable and peaceful Sri Lanka.

If you wish to know more about the Trust and how you can support us, please email us at admin@neelan.org.

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