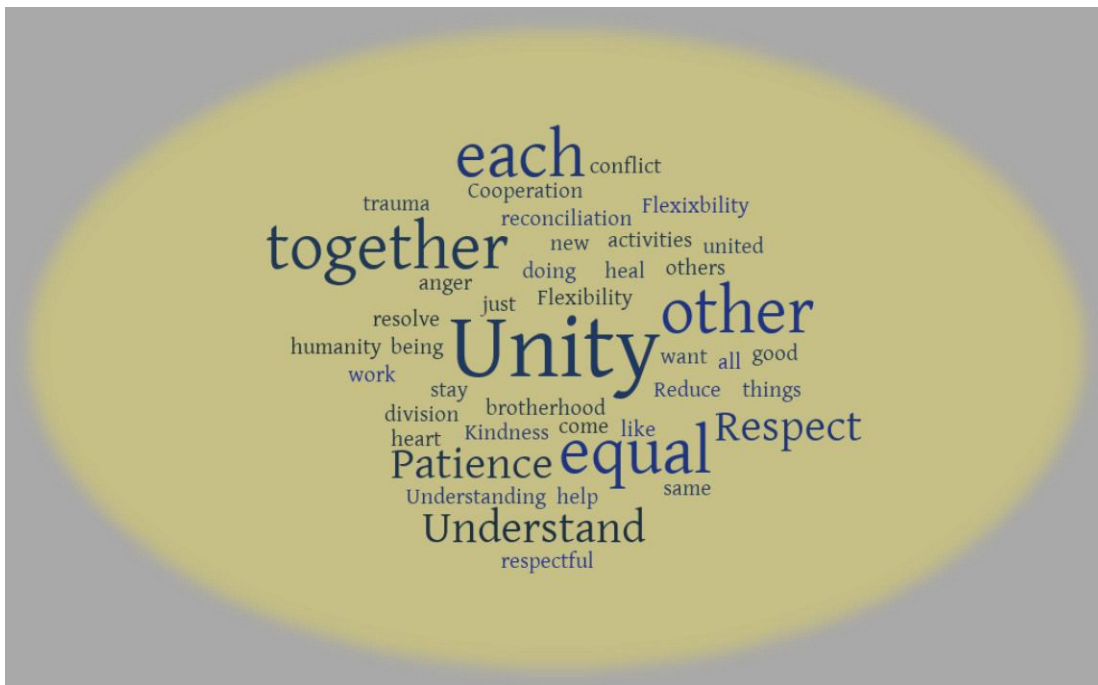![Search for Common Ground logo]

# FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

## Community Memorialization Project, Phase I and II



**Evaluation and Report Compiled By**

Nilakshi De Silva and Mohammed Sadaath
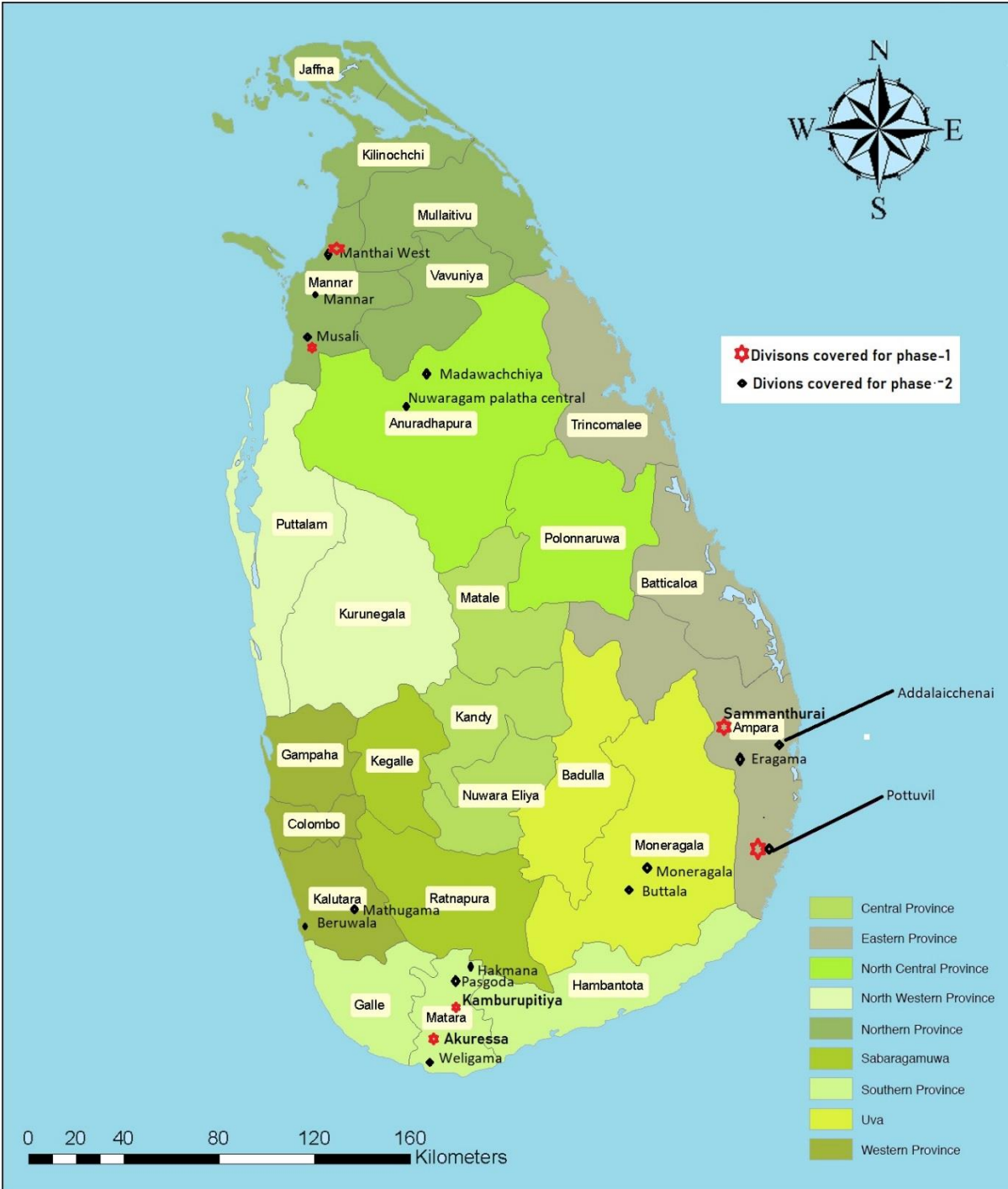
April 2020

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

CMP      Community Memorialization Project

DE        Developmental Evaluation

ISIS      Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

JVP      Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna

LLRC    Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission

LTTE    Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

NTJ      National Tawhid Jamaat

Search   Search for Common Ground

TJ        Transitional Justice

Cover image shows the values identified by youth participating in the CMP dialogue workshops, as those which resonate the most for them.

# Map of CMP Project Locations: Phase I and II

## CMP –Impelemented Districts and Divisons

Jaffna

Kilinochchi

Mullaitivu

Manthai West

Mannar
Mannar

Vavuniya

Musali

Madawachchiya

Nuwaragam palatha central

Anuradhapura

Trincomalee

Puttalam

Polonnaruwa

Matale

Batticaloa

Kurunegala

Kandy

Addalaicchenai

Sammanthurai
Ampara

Eragama

Gampaha

Kegalle

Badulla

Pottuvil

Nuwara Eliya

Colombo

Moneragala

Moneragala

Buttala

Kalutara
Mathugama

Ratnapura

Beruwala

Hakmana
Pasgoda

Hambantota

Galle

Kamburupitiya

Matara

Akuressa

Weligama

**Divisons covered for phase-1**
**Divisons covered for phase-2**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Central Province |
| | Eastern Province |
| | North Central Province |
| | North Western Province |
| | Northern Province |
| | Sabaragamuwa |
| | Southern Province |
| | Uva |
| | Western Province |

0  20  40    80       120      160
Kilometers

N
W    E
S

# Acknowledgements

# Preface

This is the final evaluation report of the Community Memorialization Project (CMP), implemented by Search for Common Ground,[1] Sri Lanka and HerStories project[2], together with local partners Akkaraipattu Women's Development Foundation in Ampara, Viluthu Centre for Human Resources Development in Mannar; Prathiba Media Network in Matara and Sarvodaya in Anuradhapura, Moneragala and Kalutara, with funds provided by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). The project was implemented in two Phases: Phase I, from September 2015 to April 2018, was implemented in three districts, Matara in the South, Ampara in the East and Mannar in the North of Sri Lanka. In Phase II, the project was extended to cover new divisions in the existing three districts as well as three new districts; Kalutara in the South, Anuradhapura in the North Centre, and Moneragala in the Uva Province. Phase II was implemented from August 2018 to January 2020.

The Developmental Evaluation (DE) Approach was used to support the project and provides the basis for the evaluation findings relating to the implementation and achievements of the CMP detailed in this report. It was written by Nilakshi De Silva (independent external consultant) and Modammed Sadaath (M&E staff member from SFCG, Sri Lanka), who comprise the DE team.

The report documents project outcomes and learning from the CMP experience. It is structured in six parts; part 1 provides a background and introduction to CMP, part 2 describes how CMP and the DE were operationalized, and part 3 sets out the methodology used to assess outcomes and generate and learning. Part 4 discusses the project outcomes while part 5 provides a reflection to identify the lessons from this project. Part 6 describes the stories of change collected through the DE, which illustrate how participants engaged with the project and how it impacted their attitudes and behavior.

---

[1] https://www.sfcg.org/sri-lanka/
[2] http://herstoryarchive.org/

# Contents

# Executive Summary

Sri Lanka emerged from a 26-year war in 2009 with a military victory over the Tamil separatist rebels, LTTE, but is still struggling to promote national reconciliation and prevent the recurrence of violence. In recognition of the need, Search for Common Ground, Sri Lanka (Search), and HerStories Project in collaboration with local partners implemented the Community Memorialization Project (CMP). The project goal was to contribute to repairing the social fabric in Sri Lanka through shared memorialization of pain and through such sharing, generate empathy for 'the other'. Project activities consisted of collecting the life stories of persons affected by violence and using these stories to generate intra-district and inter district dialogue that cut across ethnic, political and socio-economic divides. In addition, there were also activities to engage the media to disseminate these stories and generate a national dialogue on memorialization and non-recurrence of violence.

Since the CMP ventured into a previously under-explored area of using memory as a tool for reconciliation within a complex and fluid context, the Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach was used to support the project to learn and innovate. The DE in CMP was implemented as an embedded evaluation with the DE team involved from the start of the project, participating in project planning, review and implementation. The project team and the DE team jointly identified two focal areas of learning, that is, *learning during implementation* which focused on assisting project staff and key stakeholders to identify and understand the community reactions to project activities and changes in the context, and formulate rapid responses; and *learning from the project experience* which focused on assisting project staff and other stakeholders to reflect on where they end up and make judgments about the implications of what has happened for future programming and redesigning. These two learning areas were identified to respond to the project team and partners who needed to be able to adapt the project during implementation as well as report to external stakeholders on outcomes achieved. In this sense the DE in CMP was a hybrid, covering both traditional and non-traditional evaluation activities. DE activities were carried out in parallel with project implementation, providing a continuous feedback of M&E data to the project team, to document learning and inform program adaptations. At the same time, to capture the evaluation findings detailed in this report, the DE team used case studies, surveys and key informant interviews at various points during project implementation.

CMP was implemented as an exploratory project, to pilot innovative activities as well as learn from the project experience about using memory to promote non-recurrence of violence. While its three main objectives remained the same through Phase I and Phase II, project activities, outputs and expected outcomes were regularly reviewed and revised, with the support of the DE methodology, in line with what was being learned about what was working and what was not, and what was changing in the context.

CMP's first objective was to provide a platform for people of both genders, diverse ethnicities and various locations, to come together and exchange their experiences of violence and hopes for the future. To this end, 98 dialogue workshops were held at the village level in Phase I and II with the participation of over 3,200 people. A further 30 dialogue workshops were held at the divisional level with the participation of 854 people. At the district level, 9 exposure visits were completed with the participation of 273 people. Additionally in Phase II, 13 inter-generational dialogue workshops were conducted in 6 districts with the

participation of 403 youth and a further 6 inter-district peer exchanges were conducted with the participation of 191 youth.

These dialogue workshops have increased people-to-people engagement; in all, 628 people came forward to formally narrate and document their stories through the CMP and many others shared their stories informally at the workshops. *Ex post* survey data at the end of Phase I shows that CMP participants are twice as likely as non-participants to know many people from other ethnic groups who have suffered due to ethnic violence, war or communal clashes. Friendships bonds have been created across ethnic, language and geographic locations through the CMP, and these have been helped by the use of hosting to accommodate participants visiting from other districts and communities during the inter-district peer exchanges, long periods of time spent travelling together to other districts and when there is a common language. Youth, unlike adults, are less deterred by language barriers and have used technology and social media to form friendships with youth from other communities and locations. Overall, CMP's workshop structure (which is three step, going from village to inter divisional and inter district levels with the same participants) and workshop content (which focused on emphasizing commonalities in terms of memories of violence and common values, are organized around activities rather than lectures, and combine discussion with field visits) provide a replicable template to encourage deeper people-to-people engagement.

CMP also aimed to engage with youth in Sri Lanka and increase their ability and interest in promoting non-recurrence of violence. While baseline data suggests that the youth who participated in CMP were already interested in reconciliation related activities, there is evidence of increased interest among participating youth in promoting non recurrence of violence. Youth case study respondents demonstrated a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of conflict resolution they learned at the workshops. However, only 2 out of 14 case study respondents said that they have already had the opportunity to put this knowledge into practice, which is disappointing, given that 2019 was a year of heightened tension between communities, especially after the Easter bombings. Youth also face multiple barriers and challenges which discourage them from taking action to promote non-recurrence of violence. For example, several youth respondents spoke of being ridiculed for taking a stand against racist attitudes after the Easter bombings. Others spoke of the difficulties they face when they try to resolve conflicts between older adults. Overall, skills building should be more practical, more hands-on, and draw more from real life examples so that the youth can see their applicability to their own lived circumstances better.

CMP's second objective was to preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience. To this end 354 stories, which include letters, photos, village maps, children maps, video and audio stories have been archived. CMP catalogued, translated, digitized and uploaded these stories in to the digital archive, [www.memorymap.lk](www.memorymap.lk), and also preserved them in the National Archives as well as dispersed archives located in project districts. These stories were disseminated through 7 Television episodes and 11 episodes of radio talk shows, and workshops with journalists (which resulted in 47 newspaper articles on topics relating to reconciliation and non-recurrence of violence). In addition in Phase II, 15 thirty second video clips in Sinhala and Tamil languages were also telecast through 3 private TV channels and shared via social media. Based on numbers provided by the TV and Radio stations, the media outreach is thought to have reached in excess of 300,000 people, but it is not clear what impact they have had on changing attitudes and behavior.

CMP's third objective, to facilitate a process of common understanding on policy outlooks and programs on managing, including and using historical memories, was originally expected to be achieved through the collaborative development of a White Paper on memory and memorialization. However, during the implementation of CMP Phase I, changes in the context at the national level saw the introduction of multiple new mechanisms under the transitional justice (TJ) process. At the same time, while there was a plethora of activities at the national level, there was less attention paid by the state as well as other implementers to promote reconciliation at the grassroots level. Reflecting on these context level changes, the project team decided to replace the production of a White Paper on memory work with multiple practice papers. In all 14 publications were issued by the CMP, of which 2 are discussion papers, 2 are practice notes, 4 are facilitation guides and 1 is a toolkit. These have been disseminated widely within the development community in the country and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that they have been used to design similar projects by other donors and other NGOs working in Sri Lanka.

Overall, the CMP is based on the assumption that a few people with skills and interest in mitigating or transcending conflict can counteract aggressive elements at the grassroots level. These 'champions' are the target of the CMP dialogue workshops and skill building and number around 450. There is some evidence from case studies to suggest that these champions are coming forward to mitigate and de-escalate conflict but these conflicts are usually small scale and often within their own communities. These efforts suggest that the champions are attempting to understand and engage with conflicts in their own community groups, and bodes well that they may develop from there to working towards non-recurrence of violence at a larger scale

CMP provides lessons and recommendations for funders and implementers interested in encouraging community level dialogue, with a view to promoting national reconciliation and non-recurrence of violence.
- The CMP experience suggests that more initiatives such as CMP are needed to encourage people-to-people engagement across various divisions, under suitable conditions as interactions that are happening organically can lead to worsening mistrust and tensions.
- To promote deeper connections, people-to-people interactions should happen over a period of time (at least several days) and using activities such as games, role plays, visits to places of interest and so on. In addition, participants need to be encouraged to have a positive mindset about other communities before they engage with each other very closely, such as hosting a person from another community.
- To be more effective, initiatives using memory and individual histories to promote non-recurrence of violence should include those directly affected directly recounting their memories of violence, as well as visiting places where violent events have occurred in the past. Both elements are necessary in order to make the memories 'real' for outsiders, which will help them to understand and change their attitudes.
- Skills development for youth should be provided through hands-on experience of engaging with conflict, especially on social media. Youth should be supported to learn how to engage positively in conflicts between adults, and they should be trained in aspects of Do-No-Harm as well. Also more needs to be done after workshops end, to promote networking and developing structures of mutual support among participating youth.
- Projects that are attempting innovation in complex and fluid contexts need to have a medium to long term time horizon, with reflexivity built into the design. Project teams need to be open to learning and

adaptation. Even scale up of tested models should be well supported by M&E, to learn and adapt to changes in location and context.

- Greater use should be made of Developmental Evaluation to provide support to implementation teams engaging in complex contexts and on sensitive issues such as reconciliation. Use of DE ensures that monitoring and evaluation support us available to project teams thinking through complex and difficult implementation issues. When using DE, there should be regular reflection with implementation staff about the DE itself, to help them understand the DE, how it is being operationalized in the project and their role in, and expectations of, DE.
- Selection of implementing partners should prioritize their experience working in similar content, as much as their local knowledge and networks. When they have no background in memory work or conflict related issues, adequate resources should be set aside to ensure that this gap is addressed as soon as possible.

# 1. Background: A Fluid and Complex Country Context

Sri Lanka emerged from a 26-year war in 2009 with a military victory over the Tamil separatist rebels, LTTE, but is still struggling to promote national reconciliation and prevent the recurrence of violence. The long years of violent conflict created deep divisions within the country, exacerbating some grievances and creating new ones. Immediately after the end of the war, the Government at the time embarked on a process of post-war economic development with little emphasis on addressing any of the root causes of the conflict, some of which went back to the time the country gained independence in 1948. Undercurrents of tension, such as the struggle for political voice, systemic discriminatory practices and feelings of ethno-cultural superiority one group felt over others, remained buried beneath the surface.

Constructively dealing with the past is an integral element of reconciliation and moving forward beyond violence. How this can be done in Sri Lanka is still an open question, with a multiplicity of initiatives in the national / public sphere as well as the community / personal spheres, but often with little connection in between. Foremost of these initiatives is the state-lead Transitional Justice (TJ) mechanisms introduced by the UNP – SLFP lead unity government. Based on the UN Resolution of October 2015, TJ is an umbrella term for efforts to promote securing truth, justice, accountability and reconciliation. As part of the TJ process, four mechanisms were identified, namely (i) Commission for Truth, Justice, Reconciliation, and Non-recurrence; (ii) an Office of Missing Persons (OMP); (iii) a Judicial Mechanism with a Special Counsel; and (iv) an Office for Reparations. Further, in accordance with pledges made at the UNHRC, the Government set up a new Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM), to 'design and create mechanisms to achieve truth, justice, reparations and non-recurrence' (Pannalige, 2017). The SCRM coordinates all the official bodies working on transitional justice. However, the TJ process has not delivered on its initial promise; of the four mechanism envisaged, Parliament has passed the necessary legislation to establish two, that is the OMP and the Office of Reparations, and only the OMP was functioning by the end of 2019 (Salter, 2019).

The need to know and document the 'truths' of the violent conflict is an important element in the Sri Lankan context because on the one hand the State has played a fluid role, shifting between that of protector and perpetrator, and on the other, external influences have sought to impose their own narratives on the country's conflict. However, the experience of Sri Lanka suggests that due to entrenched competing interests and competing narratives there may never be a single truth or a single version of history, and that availability and acceptance of unedited, multiple narratives is the greater priority (Hettiararchchi, 2018). It

is possible that what matters more to victims is to be heard, that the very act of telling one's own history democratizes 'truth' and legitimizes one's own life-history and agency" (De Mel, 2013). In the past decade, various opportunities have been provided to victims to tell their stories, through national mechanisms such as the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), and the Office on Missing Persons (OMP). What is unclear though, is whether these initiatives have provided what the victims want: an opportunity to be heard in the spaces important to them and obtain information that they are desperately seeking, in particular about the hundreds of people still listed as missing (Salter, 2019).

At the national level, little progress has been made in relation to the right to justice or the duty of the state to hold accountable those who are responsible for human rights violation, or the right to reparations which refers to restitution, compensation or rehabilitation provided to victims of such violations. While TJ mechanisms envisaged a Judicial Mechanism with a Special Counsel to persecute human rights violations and an Office for Reparations, neither have been effectively established. However project based support, offered through State, donor and NGO agencies, have provided practical assistance to enable the displaced to be resettled and rehoused, economic assistance to restart livelihoods and rebuild basic infrastructure. These efforts appear to be largely effective in bringing back a sense of normalcy to the war affected areas, albeit with questions about their deeper effects on society; a panel survey of resettled communities in the North and East conducted by the Centre for Poverty Analysis reveals positive changes in people's access to basic services but inadequate focus on soft infrastructure, such as community building, psychological support and human rights, may undermine the longer term conflict transformation impacts of these initiatives (Karunadasa, 2016).

To remember and to grieve our losses is an important aspect of moving beyond trauma, and in Sri Lanka there is a culture of memorialization practiced by all communities living in the country. A regional consultation on the issue suggests that Sri Lankans may be seeking memorialization of the war through a combination of physical as well as non-physical memorials (Hettiarachchi, 2017). At the consultation, participants from the North noted that while intangible practices of remembrance which the Tamil community had been practicing throughout the war years (such as days of fasting, alms-giving, ritual lighting of oil lamps) could still continue, there should also be physical memorials (such as statutes, cemeteries and graveyards, bus stops, schools and pre-schools built in memory of the dead) and intangible cultural memorials (such as documentary films, songs about incidents, registers of events, posters and handbills that are from the war). Southern consultations revealed a similar desire for both physical and non-physical memorials. Some participants noted that memorialization can serve different outcomes, with non-physical memorials focusing more on spiritual elements and the process of healing, while physical

2

memorials would ensure that memory lives on. The regional consultations highlight that while it is clear that most people believe that memorialization and remembrance is necessary, there is no consensus on the form of such memorialization. The report notes that "(g)enerally, the Tamil communities would prefer physical memorials while the Sinhala communities would prefer non-physical, religious and cultural forms of memorialization."

While the scars of the decades-long conflict with the LTTE had barely begun to heal, the country was again the target of a terrorist attack. On April 21, 2019, a series of suicide bombings killed over 250 and injured hundreds of mainly Christian worshippers and foreign tourists. The bombings targeted three Christian churches in the western and eastern provinces, and three hotels in Colombo, and were carried out by the National Tawhid Jamaat (NTJ), a jihadist group with alleged ties to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Almost immediately after what became known as the Easter bombings, there was a sudden increase in anti-Muslim feeling and rhetoric (Keenan, 2019). In itself this was not new; nearly a week of anti-Muslim rioting by Sinhalese mobs in March 2018 was contained only after the government declared a state of emergency and deployed the army. After the Easter bombings however, Sri Lanka's Muslims began to experience an unprecedented degree of public pressure and insecurity, with Sinhalese nationalist politicians, religious leaders, mainstream and social media commentators seizing the moment to inject new energy into longstanding efforts to undermine the status and prosperity of the Muslim community.

Overall, Sri Lanka remains riven by ethnic and religious differences. It is still struggling to overcome the effects and impact of years of violence due to the conflict with LTTE as well as the JVP[3], and the newest fault line, between Muslims and Sinhalese, shows signs of becoming an increasingly deep rift. Deep and unaddressed trauma as well as fear and suspicion of other communities is quite common and many issues remain buried, but simmering, under the demands of day to day living. The Community Memorialization Project was introduced and implemented against this contextual background, of complexity and fluidity, with the overall aim of contributing towards the process of constructively dealing with the past to move forward towards a better, less violent future.

---

[3] The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) is a Marxist–Leninist party and political movement in Sri Lanka. The movement was involved in two armed uprisings against the ruling governments in 1971 and 1987–89.

# 2. Introduction to CMP: Rationale, Objectives and Activities

## Rationale and Relevance

The Community Memorialization Project (CMP) was initially conceived as a civil-society led, people's memorialization project, which sought to bridge the gap between official State-sponsored post-war processes and the need for ground-level initiatives to facilitate multiple truths and multiple voices to deal with Sri Lanka's past. The project prioritized public acknowledgement of multiple 'subjective truths' and preservation of people's histories and remembrance. Some of the key questions that drove the development of the project were:

- How can a memory project move from an archival product to a process that uses documented narratives to contribute to justice and peace?

- How can story-telling and sharing of life histories create a sense of catharsis, empathy and compassion? And can such emotion be used towards peacebuilding and reconciliation?

- How can memory be used to understand the root causes of conflict in Sri Lanka?

- Can story-telling be used to facilitate an acceptance that there are many 'truths' and that the absolute truth may not matter as much as the ability and the space to tell one's story, and to be acknowledged?

- How can we build on the spontaneous acts of memorialization and rituals of memory that exist at the grassroots level, in order to complement rather than restrict them?

- How can we make it not simply about passing on memory and experience to the next generation, but also about creating a discourse of what this means for Sri Lankans emerging from a culture of violence and conflict?

At inception, the CMP emphasized preserving historical memory and memorialization, which is due in part to the legacy of the previous HerStories[4] project, which collected the narratives of mothers and was based on the idea that peoples' histories should be self-authored and unedited. It found that there is a fundamental human connection between mothers, from all ethnicities and across geography; the shared loss, even if the degree of suffering or experiences differ, encourages empathy for each other as mothers, and in the end, a sense of shared hope for a better future for their children. Learning from the previous project, CMP

---

[4] The Herstories Project (www.herstoryarchive.org) generated a memory and oral history archive containing the histories of 285 women from 7 districts in the North, East and South of Sri Lanka. Over the period July 2012 through March 2013, the project collected the narratives of mothers from various parts of the country, on the basis that without oral histories, the gendered perspective of war, peace and security is inadequate. A curated exhibition of 70 narratives traveled to Galle, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Colombo, London and Canada, with smaller exhibitions traveling to Kabul, New York, Sydney and New Delhi. At each location, engagement with the material was encouraged through dialogue and discussion.

expanded to collect the narratives of both women and men, and has a greater focus on taking people's histories back to their communities, to foster community level dialogue and engagement.

CMP aimed to preserve historical memory, but it also looked beyond archiving to promoting people-to-people engagement to deal with one's own and other's memories. This took the form of 'using' memory to explore how it might impact, support and sustain a longer-term peacebuilding process. There was no definitive proof that storytelling and experience sharing could lead to meaningful dialogue for non-recurrence of violence in Sri Lanka and as such, the theory of change devised at the very beginning of CMP was rife with assumptions. Some of the initial assumptions were:

- That ordinary people contribute to conflict by being ignorant of each other's experiences and of the root causes of conflict, which in turn makes them vulnerable to manipulation by those with vested interests.
- That a few people with skills and interest in mitigating or transcending conflict can counteract aggressive elements at a grassroots level.
- That ordinary people need to engage across ethnic and other divisions in order to first understand how to bridge gaps, in their own community groups before working towards non-recurrence of violence at a larger scale.
- That awakening memories of personal experiences can, not only create catharsis, but empathy towards others who have experienced violence at varying degrees.
- That shared 'Sri Lankan' values maybe an entry point to developing resilience and agency at individual and village level. Having common values, knowing the other's experiences, and understanding root causes of conflict, and a recognition of the other's needs would appeal to the peoples' yearning to 'never experience another war'; especially when faced with emerging conflicts and unrest.
- That creating awareness of experiences of violence and shared values across ethno-social groups could create connections and opportunities for future peace, especially amongst the next generation that might not have directly experienced violence in their lives.
- That understanding conflict, may provide skills to recognize early warning signs and strengthen community resistance.

## Objectives and Activities

As set out in the project proposals, the specific objectives of CMP Phase I and II were:

- To create platforms for individuals and communities, from across ethnic, political and regional divides, to share their stories and engage in community dialogue and memorializing;
- To preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience; and
- To facilitate a process of common understanding on policy outlooks and programs on managing and using historical memories.

To achieve these objectives, project activities included collecting and archiving peoples' histories, as well as using the histories through workshops, exhibitions, television and radio programs, websites and social media to create a public discourse on history, memory, violence and personal responsibilities in preventing violence by returning to a discipline of value-based living (Box 1).

**Box 1: CMP Objectives and Activities in Phase I**

| Specific Objective | Results | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| 1. To create platforms for individuals and communities, from across ethnic, political and regional divides, to share their stories and engage in community dialogue and memorializing | 1.1 A grassroots movement for action on memory and remembrance is initiated by people across dividing lines<br>1.2 Community owned public memorials are developed in three districts | *1.1. Media Campaign* to elicit public response on memorialization.<br>*1.2. Community Based Dialogue* about memory and story sharing.<br>*1.3. District Based Dialogues* to engage the community in in-depth memory work through creative methods.<br>*1.4. Inter District Dialogues* to bring people together across dividing lines around shared experiences.<br>*1.5. Building Community Memorials* by the communities, with support from artists. |
| 2. To preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience. | 2.1 The importance of historical memorializing is widely communicated and accepted<br>2.2 People's histories are achieved and preserved for posterity as an online archive | *2.1. Developing an Online Archive* for the Memory Project by translating, digitalizing, cataloguing, and collating.<br>*2.2. Documentation of Dialogues and Memorials* to be shared with policy makers and other stakeholders.<br>*2.3. Sharing the Stories* with public and school libraries accessible to community members and students, civil society organizations (CSOs), policy makers, and diaspora. |
| 3. To facilitate a process of common understanding on policy outlooks and programs on managing, including, and using historical memories. | 3.1 A white paper on managing, including, and using historical memories is consultatively developed | *3.1. Series of Meetings with Regional and National Stakeholders* to discuss the importance of grassroots memorializing for peacebuilding.<br>*3.2. Writing a White Paper* with recommendations on doing memory work<br>*3.3. Final workshop*, which will focus on advocating for policy on memory work |

*Source: project proposal, 2015*

As the project progressed, its approaches, content and expectations shifted and changed shape. Using Developmental Evaluation methodology, the project was designed with flexibility and reflexivity built-in. Through constant feedback from the stakeholders (participants, NGO and community leaders at the grassroots level, project partners, people's consultations), the project team reviewed, revised and dropped project activities to suit the needs of memorialization in context (see Box 2 for key adaptations that happened over the life of CMP).

At the same time, the socio-political context within which CMP functioned remained complex and dynamic with the State's TJ mechanism evolving slowly, and structures and systems being prioritized over deliberate action on memorialization. By the end of 2017, after substantial post-activity review, feedback from the participants and partners, and internal deliberations[5], the following theory of change emerged as the core elements of the project (Box 3).

**Box 3: Project Theory of Change (Fourth Iteration)**

| Objectives | Main Activity Strands | Assumptions | Outcomes | Assumptions | Goal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduce passivity at local level during conflict<br>• Less likely to be manipulated<br>• More agency | Platforms for creating awareness and knowledge of the other / other's experience | *Dealing with one's own experience: catharsis* | Increased cultural literacy<br><br>Reduced racism, mistrust | *That ordinary people can reduce conflict by being able to identify emerging local conflicts, have more agency* | |
| Create resilience and leadership at local level<br>• Ability to understand the conflict within their community<br>• Have the necessary values to prevent it going far | Building and strengthening skills for understanding conflict, value based thinking<br><br>Archiving, memory walks | *Looking at their own experience and that of others* **creates empathy** *(it happened to all of us)*<br><br>*Awareness of shared values shows the underlying* **similarity** *as well as awareness of* **differences in needs** | Increased awareness of other's experiences (what happened to them, why, what are their needs)<br><br>Increased feeling of connection between people, engagement/ collaboration | *That a few people with skills can counteract the aggressive elements*<br><br>*That we need to engage across ethnic / other divisions to have non recurrence of violence* | Non recurrence of violence |
| Preserve historical memory | | | | | |

_____

[5] In addition to multiple informal meetings to share analysis of feedback received, 3 formal review meetings were held, in March 2016, May 2016 and September 2017, to reflect on the project experience and lessons learned and revisit its Theory of Change (See Annex 1: Timeline of Project and DE Activities)

**Box 2: Learning by doing - Some key adaptations in CMP**

| Issue | Tool which helped to identify this issue | Adaptations |
|---|---|---|
| There is no consensus within communities at the grass root level on whether and what kind of memorials they want | After Action Review of regional consultations, team reflections | Building physical memorials replaced with more focus on building skills at the grass root level for non-recurrence of violence |
| Changes in context at the national level and new initiatives introduced for reconciliation and historical memory, but less attention at grass root level | Iterative Theory of Change, team reflections | White paper on memory work replaced by multiple practice papers. Project focus shifted from policy influence at the national level to local level, specifically by creating 'champions' who can promote memory work, reconciliation between communities and prevent the recurrence of violence at the local level |
| Project goal is vague | Iterative Theory of Change | Goal adjusted to go beyond preserving memory to include preventing the recurrence of violence |
| Organic intergenerational transfer of memory happens when youth and elderly are present | After Action Review of village level dialogue workshops, team reflections | Minimum quotas introduced for participants by age and gender |
| Some facilitators are not following the facilitation guide | After Action Review of village level dialogue workshops, diary tool | Change of facilitators |
| Some workshops have a few illiterate participants | After Action Review of village level dialogue workshops | Use of video, more than written content, to share stories |
| Poor selection of venues | After Action Review of inter divisional level dialogue workshops | Provision of improved guidelines relating to workshop logistics to partners |
| Securing the participation of Muslims in Matara | Diary tool, After Action Review tool | Various measures, such as providing transport facilities to help them get to the workshops, requesting prior confirmation of participation, changing venues and dates to suit the community |
| Attrition of participants, in particular Champions | Case studies, team reflections | Greater efforts to stay in touch with champions in between project activities. Greater focus on 'creating' new village level champions rather than existing community leaders who already have high demands on their time |

The outcomes expected were to contribute to non-recurrence of violence through the reduction of passivity, increasingly individual and community agency, providing awareness and skills in order to make community groups less malleable to manipulations by forces with vested interest in conflicts, re-establishing links across boundaries and a return to 'core values', with the individuals and community groups with whom the project works.

Implementation of Phase I was a learning experience which provided nuance to the assumptions made at the design stage of CMP and highlighted many lessons for future programming, such as:

- **Dialogue should begin with homogenous groups:** The strategy of having homogeneous groups at the start of the dialogue process was effective and cathartic, as people were able to express themselves and their prejudices freely which enabled the subsequent sessions of working through painful experiences towards non-recurrence of violence for all communities through values – a more useful conversation. The safe and open space created by having members of their own community present, enabled deeper discussion.

- **The logic of the dialogue workshop, which built on each session, was validated:** The dialogue process of: - a) expressing personal experiences, b) seeing others' stories, c) building on empathy felt for each other towards expressing the need for non-recurrence of violence, d) agreeing that a value-based society will help towards this and identifying simple, practical values for co-existence and peace in daily life – was validated in the responses and level of engagement from participants across the districts.

- **People who were vocal and engaged in civic activism naturally became spokespeople on the need of establishing values and morals in their communities**. The workshop content had more traction with those identified as 'champions'. They helped to create a more energetic and engaging dialogue at the divisional level and inter-district exchanges.

- **Promoting reconciliation required a people-centered approach**: The idea of building memorials was contested during CMP's consultations, which reinstated the need for careful consideration of this concept by civil society as well as the government. This highlighted the importance of consulting people at the local level and engaging their feedback in adjusting project activities, whenever required**.**

- **To generate a public discourse, the media engagement needs to be broad:** Rather than limiting the media engagement to journalists, social activists, bloggers and educators, exploring possible linkages with youth groups, media or communications staff of different entities such as faith based organizations generated a wider hype on both traditional and new media. These efforts were helpful

in creating a public discourse on the topic of non-recurrence of violence by sharing the collection of stories about the costs of war and violence which lead people to go beyond their comfort zones and expose them to engage with the 'other'.

CMP Phase II was designed to consolidate the achievements of Phase I. The project goal and objectives remained the same, but focus shifted to Objectives 1 and 2, consolidating and extending the project by covering new locations, adding new activities and specifically targeting young people (Box 4).

**Box 4: CMP Objectives and Activities in Phase II**

| Specific Objective | Outcomes | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| 1. To create platforms for individuals and communities, from across ethnic, political and regional divides, to share their stories and engage in community dialogue and memorializing. | 1.1 Increased people-to-people engagement within and across communities through dialogue on non-recurrence of violence. <br> 1.2 Increased ability and interest of participating youth to promote non-recurrence of violence through strengthened understanding of memory, transitional justice and peace building tools. | *1.1 Multilevel people-to-people dialogues around non-recurrence in existing districts* <br> *1.2 Multilevel people-to-people dialogues around non-recurrence in new districts* <br> *1.3 Intergenerational dialogue and youth-led community facilitation* <br> *1.3a - One-day intergenerational dialogues* <br> *1.3b - Peer exchange* <br> *1.3c - Facilitation Training* <br> *1.3d - Youth-led community dialogue* <br> *1.4 Small grant schemes for community led initiatives* <br> *1.5 Sharing workshops at district and national level* |
| 2. To preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience. | 2.1 Increased public discourse on memorialization, narratives, shared values and non-recurrence of violent conflict through diverse media platforms. | *2.1 Public exhibition on non-recurrence* <br> *2.2 Establishment and engagement with dispersed archives* <br> *2.3 Media Outreach and engagement* |

## Implementation Structures

The CMP was implemented with the close support and participation of a number of stakeholders, many of whom were new to memory work.  In addition to the project team which itself consisted of a diverse group of people drawn from various professional backgrounds as well as ethnicities, religions, geographic locations and gender, the project was implemented at the local level by partner organizations, namely Akkaraipattu Women's Development Foundation in Ampara, Viluthu Centre for Human Resources Development in Mannar; Prathiba Media Network in Matara and Sarvodaya in Anuradhapura, Moneragala and Kaluthara. These Partner Organizations had varied levels of experience and capacity to work on a pilot initiative such as CMP and substantial effort was made to regularly bring the partners together through Partner Meetings, to discuss project concepts and activities as well as learn from each other's implementation experience.

The structure and personnel on the CMP team underwent some key changes from Phase I to Phase II which affected the quality of implementation. In Phase I, the project team leader was also the conceptual lead of the project, and there was an overarching focus on learning and adapting. In Phase II, this leadership from a conceptual perspective was absent at the day to day implementation level, and the focus shifted more towards rolling out the activities and achieving targets, than learning and adapting. In a project such as the CMP, this was an unfortunate development as it limited the learning possibility of Phase II.

Finally, the implementation of CMP Phase II was severely affected by the Easter bombings in April 2020. The breakdown of trust and relationships between the communities was so severe that it was impossible to bring them together for meetings.

> "In Mannar, [partner organisation] says nothing much can be done right away as it is not possible to hold community meetings under the current climate. After one month, he recommends meeting separately with each community, especially CMP champions, and having discussion. After this, it would be possible to have both communities together and have discussions.  This approach appears to be supported by all the champions / respondents interviewed in Mannar. There is also a suggestion to include religious leaders at the dialogue meetings to promote trust."
>
> - Extract from Context Analysis Report, May 2019
> (Summary based on 13 interviews conducted during April 25 – May 17, 2019)

As much as 3 months of implementation time was lost due to this unsettled situation and many activities, such as the small grants scheme and district visits, were rushed to be completed before CMP closed. As one partner noted, during the month of October 2019, they had to prepare to host a district dialogue and visit, organize groups to visit two other districts as well as the implement 3 small grants under the CMP. Since the Partner Organizations or their local offices are small and had just one or two people working on CMP, this was too much pressure and had an adverse effect on the quality of implementation.

# 3. Methodology: Developmental Evaluation (DE) Approach

## Evaluation Approach

CMP was supported by a Developmental Evaluation team throughout the implementation period. Developmental Evaluation or DE, is a relatively new approach to evaluation which emerged as a result of weaknesses in the traditional forms of evaluation, particularly to evaluate innovative or pilot initiatives in complex environments. Unlike traditional evaluations, DE is not focused on providing judgments of success or failure of a project, but rather on providing feedback, capturing learnings and supporting changes in direction of the project, while it is ongoing. In many ways, DE offers a real alternative to the traditional approaches of Summative and Formative Evaluation. The originator of the DE approach, Michael Quinn Patton, notes that:

> *'Developmental evaluation refers to long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development. Developmental evaluation processes include asking evaluative questions and gathering information to provide feedback and support developmental decision-making and course corrections along the emergent path. The evaluator is part of a team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design and test new approaches in a long-term, on-going process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. The evaluator's primary function in the team is to elucidate team discussions with evaluative questions, data and logic, and to facilitate data-based assessments and decision-making in the unfolding and developmental processes of innovation.' (Dozois et al, 2010)*

SFCG chose the DE Approach to monitor and evaluate the CMP with the hope that DE will help the project stakeholders to understand the activities of a program operating in dynamic, novel environments with complex interactions such as historical memory. At the outset, the DE was asked to answer a series of Key Questions which comprise of four main areas of questions as follows:

- What happened in the project? What changed, how did the project adapt to new learning and changes in context?
- What can we do better?
- What outcomes were achieved?
- What did we learn from the project experience?

Because DE was a new approach to the project team, to evaluation in Sri Lanka and to peacebuilding efforts more widely, the DE for CMP started with multiple consultations and sharing of information. Unlike in traditional evaluations where the evaluator provides the evaluation framework at the outset for approval by

the project team, the DE framework for the CMP was collaboratively developed over several months and set out the objectives, tools and reporting methods for the DE. The DE team and the project team jointly identified two focal areas of learning, that is, *learning during implementation* which focused on assisting project staff and key stakeholders to identify and understand the community reactions to project activities and changes in the context, and formulate rapid responses; and *learning from the project experience* which focused on assisting project staff and other stakeholders to reflect on where they end up and make judgments about the implications of what has happened for future programming and redesigning. These two learning areas were identified to respond to the project team and partners who needed to be able to adapt the project during implementation as well as report to external stakeholders on outcomes achieved. In this sense the DE for CMP was a hybrid, required to cover non-traditional evaluation activities, such as supporting the project during implementation, as well as more traditional activities such as evaluating the achievements of the project and capturing lessons.

The DE in CMP was implemented as an embedded evaluation. The DE team consisted of an external consultant (part time) and a project team member (full time)[6] who were involved from the start of the project, participating in project planning, review and implementation. In effect, the DE team became part of the project team, participating in decision making about the program and facilitating discussion about how to evaluate what was happening. The main focus of the DE team was to design tools for continuous data collection, provide analysis of the M&E data that was becoming available and facilitate reflection by the project team to identify the adaptations required. All team members participated in discussions to identify evaluation judgments together, and decided together how to apply the implications of results, or adaptations, for the next stage of implementation. In addition, the DE consultant visited project areas on 10 occasions in Phase I and 8 occasions in Phase II, each visit lasting several days, and was available to share ideas and generate discussion with the team on implementation as well as larger issues of project theory. In DE, "there is no pretense of external independence."[7] Instead, the DE team strove to be objective and unbiased, while also helping the project team to make decisions based on data and analysis, rather than personal feelings or opinions.

DE activities of monitoring, observation, feedback, reflection and supporting adaptations, were carried out in parallel with project implementation, providing a continuous feedback to the project team (See Annex 1

---

[6] In phase I the project team member who was part of the DE team was also managing the implementation of CMP. In Phase II, a project manager joined the team, and the project team member who was part of the DE team was only responsible for M&E of CMP.
[7] Patton, M Q.1994, p.316

for a timeline of Project and DE activities in Phase I and II). Structured around a continuous quality improvement process, DE's learning during implementation approach followed the steps of *plan, do, check and act* (Kartikowati, 2013). Most activities had inbuilt feedback mechanisms, such as formalized methods for participants to provide written feedback after each dialogue event. Such data was also analyzed by the DE team and provided back to the team at project meetings as analysis notes. These formal analyses were provided in addition to the raw data, such as from in-depth interviews with partners and project participants, which the project team was able to use directly as they came in from the field. These helped to generate discussion within the team, as well as ground the discussion on analyzed data. Overall, as an evaluation approach, DE is a way to ensure a strong emphasis on monitoring, learning and evaluation throughout the project, not just at the start and /or end of a project and to promote a learning mindset within the project team.

Instead of focusing on achieving a specific set of outcomes, the DE approach is geared more towards providing information and learning to help the project team understand their role in relation to the context and the way the project affects that context[8]. Nevertheless, a Results Framework was developed to assess the performance of CMP, which was adjusted and updated as the project evolved (Box 5). While project objectives as set out in the Results Framework remained the same throughout Phase I and II, the expected outcomes as well as indicators underwent several revisions as the project and DE team's understanding of the context and the achievements and limitations of the project became clearer.

---

[8] http://informingchange.com/developmental-evaluation/

**Box 5: CMP Results Framework Phase I and II**

| | **Phase I** | **Outcome Indicators** |
|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Objective 1**: To create platform for individuals and communities from across ethnic, political and regional divides to share their stories and engage in community dialogue and memorializing | **Outcome 1.1:** A grassroots movement for action on memory and remembrance is initiated by people across dividing lines | # of people who came forward and narrate the stories of either themselves or others in their communities |
| | | # of people who are interested in engaging in historical memory work and related dialogue sessions |
| | | % of dialogue session participants who cite examples of personal stories from people from across dividing lines |
| | | % of dialogue session participants who discuss their reactions to the stories of people form "other' identity groups in their communities |
| | **Outcome 1.2:** Community owned public memorials are developed in three districts | # of people from across dividing liens who participate in planning, implementation and maintaining community memorials |
| | **Phase II** | |
| | **Outcome 1.1:** Increased people-to-people engagement within and across communities through dialogue on non-recurrence of violence. | # of people who report increased trust and relationships (over the life of the project) with people from 'other' communities |
| | | % of participants from the dialogue sessions who are have initiated activities with members of the other community to promote reconciliation in their communities |
| | **Outcome 1.2:** Increased ability and interest of participating youth to promote non-recurrence of violence through strengthened understanding of memory, transitional justice and peacebuilding tools. | % of youth who demonstrate increased knowledge on aspects of TJR and peacebuilding tools |
| | | % of trained youth who have conducted sessions for their peers based on their learnings |
| **Strategic Objective 2:** To preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience | **Phase I** | |
| | **Outcome 2.1:** The importance of historical memorializing is widely communicated | Outcome: a dialogue on memory and memorializing is occurring on various platforms (such as Facebook, archive, at the community memorial sites, other spaces/new projects) |
| | | Outcome: # and type of people accessing the historical memories documented in the online archive |
| | **Outcome 2.2:** People's histories are achieved and preserved for posterity | Output: # of visitors in the online archive |
| | | Output: Digital map and website has been developed |
| | | Output: # of stories developed, translated and digitized |
| | | Output: # of exhibitions / sharing events held, and # of visitors / participants |
| | | Output: # of project participants, school student and public who participate in exhibitions |
| | **Phase II** | |
| | **Outcome 2.1:** Increased public discourse on memorialization, narratives, shared values and non-recurrence of violent conflict through diverse media platforms | Same as Phase I |
| **Strategic Objective 3:** To facilitate a process of common understanding on policy outlooks and programs on managing, including, and using historical memories. | **Phase I** | |
| | **Outcome 3.1:** Key policy makers are aware of the importance of community memory and memorializing | # of key policymakers(out of total interviewed) who say that they are aware of important work done by the historical memory project |
| | | # of key policymakers who have visited the archive |
| | **Outcome 3.2:** policymakers and civil society leaders from across various divides collaborate and are involved in producing the white paper | # of white paper developed by the joint collaboration of the policy makers and CSO leaders from across divides |

## Data Collection and Analysis

DE approach does not advocate specific tools for data collection or analysis. Rather it leaves these choices up to the evaluation team based on the needs of the project. In CMP, several monitoring tools were developed in discussion with the project team and partners, piloted and used or discarded based on their effectiveness and usefulness to the project (Box 6).

---

**Box 6: Monitoring Tools**

Multiple tools were used to capture the learning during implementation which helped to give voice to multiple stakeholders, such as project participants, members of the project team, partners and other resource providers such as facilitators of the workshops. These tools are described below:

**Log Frame:** helped to ensure that standard data such as number of stories collected, number of participants at workshops and number of media events were regularly monitored against participants, which were then regularly reported in quarterly reports to funders.

**Participant Feedback**: After each dialogue event, the participants were asked to provide formal feedback regarding the effectiveness of the workshop. This was done for initial pocket meetings which introduced the project, regional meetings and village level meetings, as well as for division and district level meetings. In all 907 participants (272 men and 505 women) provided feedback. These feedback loops helped to refine the content and structure of the dialogue workshops.

**Media Campaign Monitoring Checklist**: Using the frame, the media team provided regular feedback, not just on outputs but on some outcome level indicators (such as public response to media articles and events).

**After Action Review:** After each dialogue event, the team (comprising of the project staff as well as the partner and facilitators), sat together to review the event under what worked, what didn't and what can be improved. These After Action Reviews brought together various perspectives and provided real time feedback to the project staff to adapt and improve implementation. In all 49 such reviews were conducted during the project period.

**Theory of Change (TOC):** Visualizing a Theory of Change as a joint exercise for the team, helped to articulate the project theory as well as assumptions and clarify the objectives. Subsequent TOC visuals were developed at critical stages of the project, which helped to 1) communicate the project activities to the team and partners and get everyone on the same page; 2) ensure than new project activities contributed to the project theory and goal; and 3) to develop multiple data collection tools as the project progressed.

**Diary:** the innovative nature of the project and the need to maximize learning from observation and piloting of various approaches, both project staff and partner staff were encouraged to keep a diary to document their thoughts and issues. However, not everyone used the diary as requested. Nevertheless, among those who did use it, the diary tool has helped to capture, articulate and identify issues as they happen and promote a culture of documentation.

**Right Now Survey:** During Phase II, a new tool was introduced to understand the partners' surface issues and their opportunities during the implementation of the project. The right now survey asks three key questions; right now (i) my biggest concerns are, (ii) the best opportunities for success are, and (iii) I most need help with.

**Outcome Harvesting:** the outcome harvesting method was used as to collect evidence of change (the 'outcomes') and then work backwards to assess whether or how the CMP project contributed to that change. The outcome harvesting method was applied at meetings with CMP partners.

---

Another set of tools, namely case studies, surveys and key informant interviews, focused on capturing the learning from the project experience; that is, to understand the outcome, effects and lessons from the project. These were structured around two questions.

- what changes have occurred in terms of perceptions, attitudes, behavior, among the project participants; and;
- what changes have occurred in the wider environment in relation to acknowledging and preserving multiple histories.

As this report is largely based on the data collected through these evaluation tools, they are described in greater detail below.

## Case studies

The **case studies** aimed to understand the change, if any, the project created in terms of perceptions and behavior among participants. In Phase I, 9-10 participants, who were identified by the project team in consultation with Partner Organizations as potential champions and / or had participated in all levels of dialogue workshops (from village through to inter-district), were purposively selected from each district with a view to obtaining a cross cut of ethnicity, gender and age. Similarly in Phase II, 6-7 participants were selected from each district (Chart 1). The in-depth interviews, using an interview guide, was conducted with each respondent at two points in time; during the project and at the end of the project.

**Chart 1: Case Study Sample, Phase I and II**
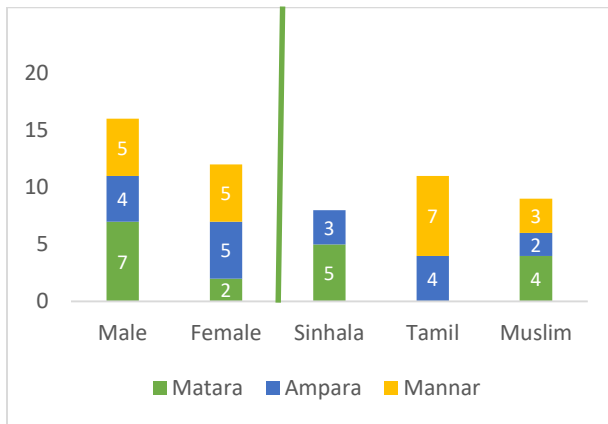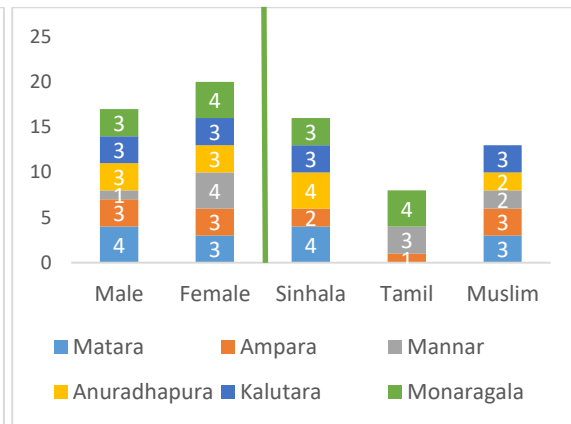


Chart 1A: Phase I                                                  Chart 1B: Phase II

## *Ex Post* Survey at the end of Phase I

A **survey** was carried out in March 2018 to assess if there were any differences in terms of empathy and openness to reconciliation activities between those who participated in the project and those who did not. A baseline survey at the start of CMP Phase I followed by an end line survey at the end of Phase I would have allowed the DE to assess the change in participants, but the DE team decided that this was not feasible given the exploratory nature of the project; project activities could, and did, change during implementation

and it was not clear what survey questions would remain relevant. As a compromise solution, the *ex post*[9] survey was carried out as a comparison between target and comparison groups. It consisted of 300 respondents; 150 participants and 150 non-participants. This number was selected with a view to balancing the need to cover a substantial proportion of project participants and resources available to carry out the survey in a rigorous manner.

To select the sample respondents, the project team, in consultation with the partner organizations, drew up a list of CMP participants (who were identified as those who participated in the inter district visits and / or at least 2 dialogue workshops). This process generated approximately 100 names from each district and a random sample was selected from each district based on this list of names. This selection allowed as much as 50% of the participants identified in the list to be surveyed. The non-participant group was selected through a matched sampling method[10], which allows for better estimates of differences by 'removing' the possible effects of other variables; after every successful interview with a participant group respondent, a non-participant who was similar in terms of ethnicity, gender and age (+/- 10 years) was selected from a neighboring house (from the third house if it was a rural area, and fifth house if it were an urban area) to make up the non-participant group. The sample profile shows that the participant and non-participant groups are similar on multiple variables such as district where they live, gender, ethnicity, religion, education and age group (Annex 2: Table 1).

Data collection was carried out through face-to-face interviews, using a semi structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered in Sinhala and Tamil as appropriate, and covered the following topics:

- Extent of cultural literacy
- Extent of racism, mistrust of the other ethnicities
- Awareness of the experiences of other ethnicities during the war
- Awareness of the needs of others (ethnicities, locations)
- Extent of connections with others (ethnicities, locations)
- Perceptions about own behavior when faced with local conflicts in future

---

[9] *Ex-post* means 'after the fact', in this case after Phase I was implemented.

[10] OECD statistics portal explains that a pair, or set of, matched samples are "those in which each member of a sample is matched with a corresponding member in every other sample by reference to qualities other than those immediately under investigation". For example, to investigate knowledge, perceptions, attitudes and behavior of a sample of project participants as compared with a sample of non-participants, better comparisons can usually be made if, to every member of the participant sample, there can be associated a member of the non-participant sample from the same location, same ethnicity, same sex and about the same age.
https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3709

Learning from feedback received during workshops, the survey tool was developed with visuals and hypothetical situations, to elicit real feelings and attitudes.

### Youth Baseline Survey: Phase II

A baseline survey was carried out in February / March 2019 with youth who participated at the inter-divisional youth dialogue workshops.  Since the objective of CMP's youth component was 'increased ability and interest of participating youth to promote non-recurrence of violence through strengthened understanding of memory, transitional justice and peacebuilding tools', the aim of the youth baseline survey was to assess the participating youth's understanding of memory, transitional justice and peacebuilding tools at the start of CMP.

A survey questionnaire was distributed to all the participants, which consisted of 17 proxy questions to gauge their perceptions about and interaction with other communities, their perceptions about the root causes of the war and their knowledge about transitional justice and reconciliation. Several questions used in the *ex post* survey at the end of Phase I were included in this questionnaire as well. Youth were asked to write down their responses and in all, 294 completed questionnaires were handed in.

While youth from across many divisions in terms of ethnicity, religion and geographic location participated, the sample surveyed is not representative of  all youth in Sri Lanka as only those who volunteered to participate in CMP were surveyed (Please see Annex 2: Table 2 for the Youth Survey Participants Profile).

DE team planned to carry out an end line survey with the same sample of youth but by the end of Phase II, it was clear to the DE team that it would be more useful to collect more in-depth information though *ex post* case studies than carry out another survey. Most of the questions in the baseline survey related to youth's knowledge of TJ mechanisms but based on consultations with the youth in five regional dialogues as well as the baseline survey itself, the project team decided that these topics will not be covered in the youth workshops,[11] which reduced the usefulness of an end line survey.

---

[11] Based on youth consultations in five regional dialogues before the youth component was designed, the project team noted that the content of the workshops may affect the selection of the target group. Specifically, they noted that concepts such as "peace, Transitional Justice', democracy etc. might be terminology that does not capture the interests of youth. As it provides no 'marketable' skill development, it limits the target group to those who may not be entering the job market. Similarly, because the subject matter requires an ability to understand concepts that are sophisticated, younger youth, especially those in the early teens may also not suit." Hettiarachchi, R. A Roadmap for the Youth Component of the Community Memorialization Project Phase II (draft). 2019 January. Internal Note.

### Key Informant Interviews

Nine **key informant interviews** were carried out to explore the changes in the policy and practice environment and to draw causal links to the project. These interviews were done using an interview guide with the implementing partners, and others connected to implementing the project at the grassroots level (Annex 2, Table 3).

## Methodological limitations

The main methodological limitation in using a DE approach in a pilot initiative relates to problems with establishing a baseline. While baseline data can be collected, there is no guarantee that the respondents will continue to participate in the project until its conclusion, or even whether the questions asked will remain valid as project activities may change during implementation. In the CMP, a number of respondents interviewed for case studies at the start of the project did not participate beyond the first round of dialogue workshops. This necessitated the identification of other case study respondents and constructing a baseline with them *ex post*. Similarly the baseline survey with youth participants contained many questions that were no longer relevant at the end of the project as the content of the youth workshops were reviewed and revised to respond better to the context.

Because the project outcomes were evolving, it was difficult to identify at the outset the best tool to capture the expected outcome. The DE team responded by designing multiple tools to address this problem. The goal of the DE was to enable continuous reflection for course correction and adaptation and Box 7 shows how this was operationalized; the left side shows multiple project activities implemented over Phase I, while the right side shows the DE tools and activities during the same period.

**Box 7: Project and DE Timeline – Phase I**

**Project related** | **DE related**

| Date | Project related | DE related |
|---|---|---|
| Jan-16 | Inception and Partner Orientation | DE Inception meeting (TOC iteration 1) |
|  | Scoping and Stakeholder Meetings | Review Meeting 1 |
| Mar-16 | Story Collection | Feedback from Stakeholder Meetings and AARs |
| May-16 |  | Review Meeting 2 |
| Jul-16 |  | DE Framework finalised |
| Sep-16 | Regional Consultation on Memorials | Review Meeting 3 |
|  |  | Feedback from Regional Consultations and AARs |
| Nov-16 |  | Review Meeting 4 (TOC iteration 2) |
| Jan-17 |  | Data collection for Case studies (Baseline) |
| Mar-17 |  |  |
| May-17 | Media Campaign | Feedback from Media Campaign |
| Jul-17 |  |  |
|  | Village level Dialogue Workshops | Feedback from Dialogue workshops and AARs |
| Sep-17 | Inter-Divisional Dialogue Workshops | Review Meeting 5 (TOC iteration 3) |
| Nov-17 |  |  |
| Jan-18 | Inter District Dialogue Workshops and Exchange Visits | TOC iteration 4 |
|  |  | Data collection for case studies (Final) |
| Mar-18 | Symposium | Data collection for Survey |

Every project activity was supported by an M&E tool, every event followed by a formal reflection, every phase was followed by a formal reflection. The timeline illustrates how these reflective exercises influenced the use of different programming tools. This DE approach generated a quantity of data and some tools proved useful, but others had to be discarded once it became clear that they would not yield useful data.

# 4. What has been achieved? Outputs and Outcomes

## Strategic Objective 1: Create platforms for individuals and communities, from across ethnic, political and regional divides, to share their stories and engage in community dialogue and memorializing

**Activities Planned and Completed**

Several types of platforms have been created through the CMP project for individuals and communities to share their stories and engage in community dialogue. The most notable of these are the dialogue workshops held at village, divisional and di

The objective of CMP's dialogue process was to engage diverse communities in order to ultimately create a group of 'champions' or community leaders who are aware of the potential of nonviolence, have a basic understanding of conflict resolution skills and are interested in non-recurrence of violence. The champions should have been exposed to multiple narratives of the war, accept that war or violence is not what they want for their future, and agree about the need for a value based society that chooses nonviolence, empathy, compassion and understanding of 'the other' as a basis for future peace[12]. The dialogue workshops were held with the same communities over a period of time and the participants who attended the district dialogue workshops had also attended the village and divisional dialogue workshops previously (Figure 1).

In Phase I, 38 dialogue workshops were held at the **village level** (13 in Ampara, 10 in Matara and 15 in Mannar District). In all 1,093 people participated in these workshops, of which 62% were women and 38 % were men. Of the total, 116 were Muslim, 279 were Sinhalese and 380 were Tamil. In Phase II, the number of participants at village level dialogue workshops increased substantially. Sixty dialogue workshops were held at the village level (10 each in Ampara, Matara, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Kalutara and Moneragala Districts) and 2,115 people participated. In Phase II there was a slight increase in the proportion of women which increased to 70%.  In all, 649 were Muslim, 1,051 were Sinhala and 415 were Tamil (Chart 2).

---

[12] Hettiarachchi, R (2019) Going Beyond the Archive: Facilitated Dialogue using Public History Collections. An introduction to the Series of Facilitate Dialogue Workshops, CMP, Colombo

**Figure 1: Rationale and Expectations of the Dialogue Process**
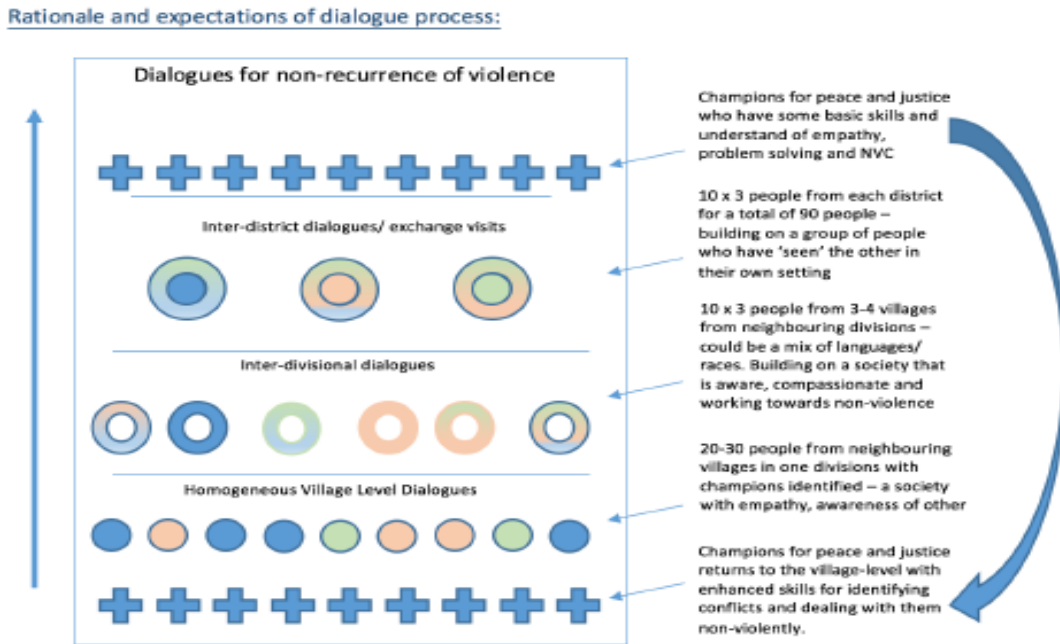


*Source: Hettiarachchi, R (2019) Going Beyond the Archive: Facilitated Dialogue using Public History Collections. An introduction to the Series of Facilitate Dialogue Workshops, CMP, Colombo*

At the **Divisional Level,** Phase I completed 11 divisional dialogue workshops, attended by 319 participants, 66% of whom were women and 44% were men.  In all, 102 Muslims, 87 Sinhala and 130 Tamils participated. In Phase II, 19 divisional level dialogue workshops were held with the participation of 535 participants. Again there is an increase in the proportion of women who made up 77% of the participants. In all, 172 Muslims, 265 Sinhala and 98 Tamils participated.

At the **District level**, 3 exposure visits were completed in Phase I with the participation of 112 people, 73% of these participants were women. Phase II, 6 such exposure visits were completed and 161 people participated. Of these 70% were women.

**Chart 2: Total Participants by Ethnicity and Gender**



Dialogue Workshop Participation, by Ethnicity

Dialogue Workship Participation, by Gender
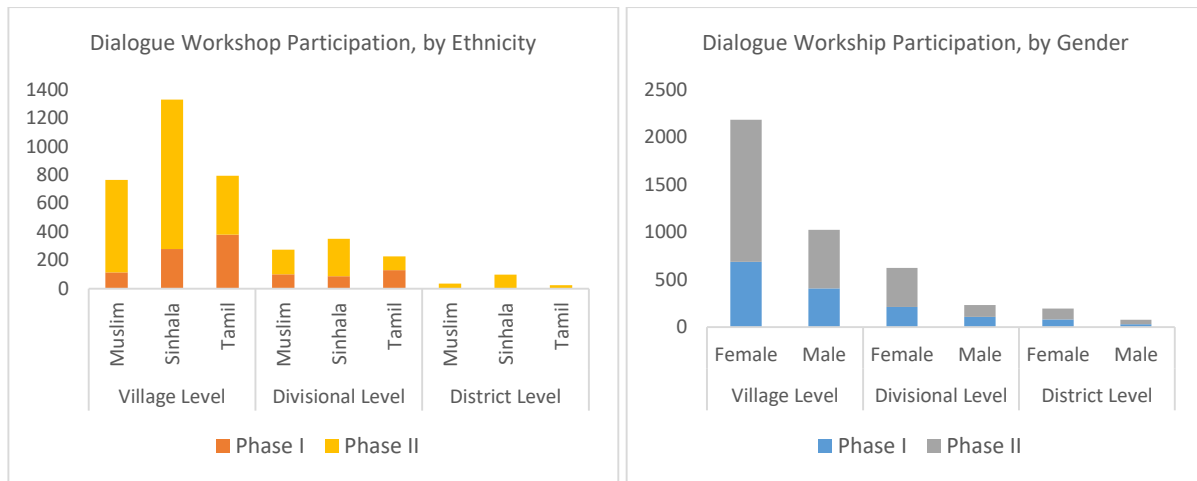
In addition, Phase II of CMP also hoped to interest and engage youth in actively seeking out truths, understanding conflict potentials, and preventing violence in and around their communities. Ideally, the project hoped to increase their conflict 'literacy' and conflict management skill-set while creating a sense of agency in youth to purposefully act to prevent violence[13]. With these objectives in view, the youth component was designed to consist of 4 phases as follows:

- **Phase 1: Introductory meeting and inter-generational dialogue**. A one day workshop at the inter-divisional level to engage adults for inter-generational dialogue on memory and values and to ease their minds about where/what their children are doing; to introduce groups of youth to each other so they can be networked and connected to each other for truth-seeking and for like-minded group strength across the division; to identify potential youth leaders to network across the division and districts later

- **Phase 2: Residential exchange visit.** A two day workshop at the inter-district level to offer youth an opportunity to see and engage with the other in a setting outside of the familiar; to introduce groups of youth to each other so they can be networked and connected to each other for truth-seeking and for like-minded group strength across ethnicity and districts; to begin the process of creating a network for action; to identify potential youth leaders to network across the districts later; for youth to understand how important 'shared history and shared values can be' in building their

---

[13] Hettiarachchi, R. A Roadmap for the Youth Component of the Community Memorialization Project Phase II (draft). 2019 January. Internal Document.

leadership qualities, especially for jobs in future where 'good practices' and working with others towards common goals are valued by employers and to be inspired by work others are doing, so they can do more in their own communities

- **Phase 3: Training for peer engagement on memory, peace and values for youth leaders.** A one day workshop to be held a month after the exchange visits.
- **Phase 4: Small-grant applications and project launch** (a month after the exchange visits a day after the facilitation training with youth, former CMP dialogue participants invited to create projects together and apply/compete for grants.

The youth component was completed with 13 inter-generational dialogues conducted in 6 districts with the participation of 403 youth. In all, 140 Muslims, 161 Sinhalese and 102 Tamils participated in these divisional level workshops (Chart 3). Participants in each workshop was drawn from one ethnic group and consisted of both males and females. The content focused on story-telling, inter-generational dialogue and value-based living and were conducted by a pool of trained facilitators.

**Chart 3: Total Youth Participants by Ethnicity and Gender**
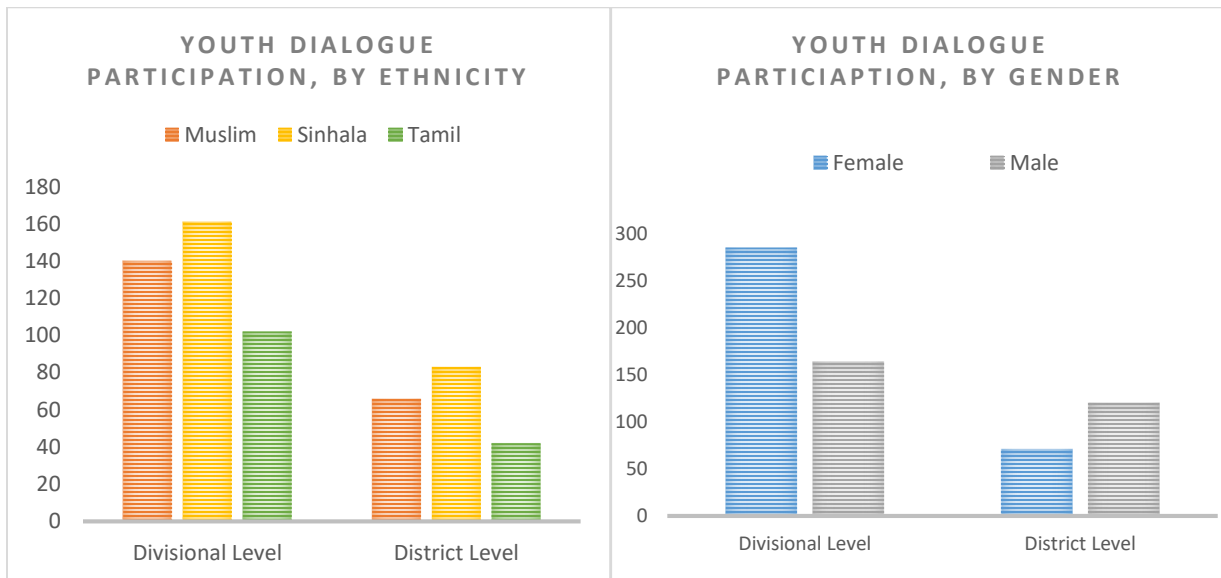


At the District Level, 6 inter-district peer exchanges were conducted with the participation of 191[14] youth (Chart 3). In these workshops the ethnicities were mixed: 3 workshops (in Ampara, Mannar and Matara) had all three ethnicities participating together while in 3 workshops (in Anuradhapura, Kalutara and

---

[14] There is some double counting as some youth participated in more than one workshop

Moneragala) two ethnicities participated together. In all, 66 Muslims, 83 Sinhalese and 42 Tamils participated in these district workshops These residential workshops were conducted by 2 facilitators (one in each language) and the content covered understanding and rising above conflict, 'walking in another's shoes' and some skill-building.

Phases 3 and 4 were not conducted due to time constraints resulting from almost three months of delay following the Easter bombings.


## Outcome: increased people-to-people engagement within and across communities through dialogue on non-recurrence of violence


CMP provided a platform for people of both genders, diverse ethnicities and ages, and from various locations, to come together and exchange their experiences of violence and hopes for the future. With the end of war between the Government and the LTTE in 2009, many physical barriers were removed and there were greater possibilities to travel and move around within the country.  As a result, there is much greater interaction across ethnic and religious divides. Yet, most of these interactions do not provide an environment conducive to sharing or discussing the war or one's own experiences of the war.  Data from CMP suggests that while many of those affected by violence have shared their stories and experiences within their own community, few have done so with other communities. For example, youth baseline survey data collected at the start of Phase II finds that over 60% of youth who attended the divisional level dialogue workshops did not know even one single person outside their own ethnic group, who had suffered directly due to ethnic violence, war or communal clashes.


The CMP provided opportunities for people to meet and share their experiences across communities. Workshops, especially at the district level, had face-to-face participation of all three ethnicities within the same space and over a two day period (Chart 4).  In all, 628 people came forward to formally narrate and document their stories through the CMP and many others shared their stories informally at the workshops. *Ex post* survey data at the end of Phase I shows that CMP participants are twice as likely as non-participants to know many people from other ethnic groups who have suffered due to ethnic violence, war or communal clashes. Case study data further show that while participants at the dialogue workshops knew or had heard of the major incidents of the war before they came to the dialogues, what they encountered at the dialogue workshops were personal stories, shared directly by those who experienced it or documented in the form of letters, in 'tree of life' format or in banners and in video format. These stories carried greater weight as they were shared in the first person, in the words and perspective of the

person who experienced it. This makes the past real and not an abstract event in history and helped to change long held attitudes and prejudices (for examples of how this happened, please see the Stories of Change in Part 6 of this report).

**Chart 4: Participation at District Dialogue Meetings (Adult and Youth), by meeting and ethnicity**
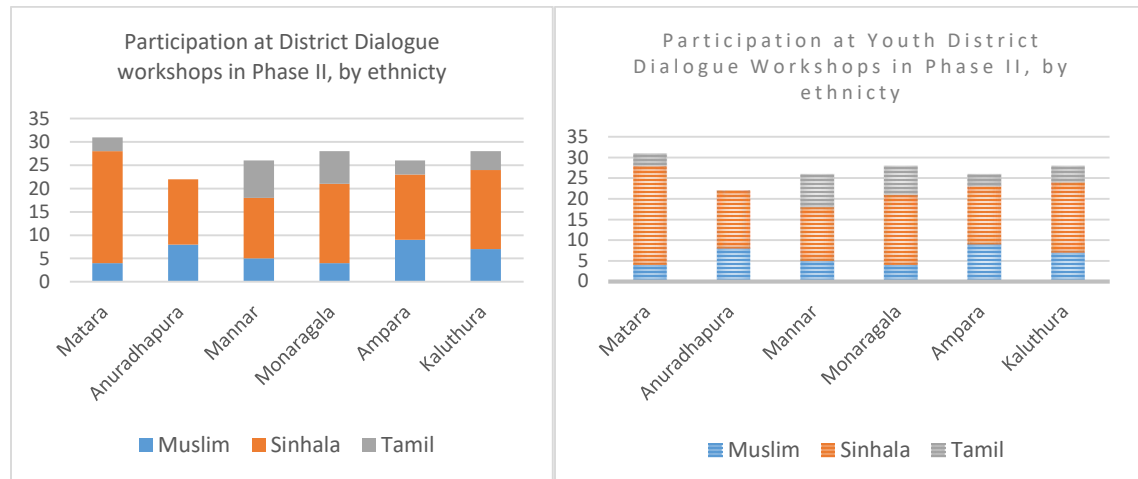


Overwhelmingly, the response to hearing about the experience of violence is sadness and empathy. More than 98% of participants who responded to the *ex post* survey at the end of Phase I said they felt sadness for the other's pain and sometimes anger that people had to undergo such suffering. When they put themselves in another's position, it also helps to put their own pain and suffering in perspective. A 52 year old Tamil man from Mannar said *"we (Tamils) say we have undergone severe hardship and loss in Mullivaikkaal. Why don't we feel for the people (Muslims) who were evacuated within 48 hours, carrying all their belongings in plastic bags? Why don't we feel the sorrow they left behind? Because of their displacement they lost their properties and lands. These things happened to them."*

Case study data also show how new friendship bonds have been created across divisions. During the district workshops, participants in the host district opened their homes to participants from other districts. For many participants this was a watershed experience, especially for the Sinhalese; a Sinhala man from Matara said "*I stayed in a Tamil house in Ampara. Initially when we got to Ampara and they handed us over to the host families I was little scared. But when [my host] started talking in Sinhala I had no problem. They are very nice people.*" His experience suggests that friendship bonds are stronger when there is a common language and common interests. "*We ended up speaking together a lot. We still speak on the phone regularly. I called him back first, after I got back home, and then he called. He is a very*

*knowledgeable person, he knows a lot about politics and we talk about those things. We speak about the war, and the elections.*"

Participants at the Youth dialogue workshops on the other hand, stayed in a hotel or dormitory setting and this impacted the nature of friendships they may have otherwise made. While they acknowledged that there may have been parental opposition if the arrangement was to stay in a stranger's house, especially for the girls, many felt that their experience of CMP would have been richer if they were able to stay in a home and not a hotel. A Sinhala young man from Ampara said "*my mother went for the workshop (in Phase I). When she got back she told us about how she stayed with a Tamil family, how she sat on the floor and the food she ate. I was really keen to have a similar experience which is why I came.*" Another young man from Moneragala said "*if we stay at a hotel we only associate with the person who is our roommate. We should go stay in the villages and stay in the homes of the people there. We need to get used to mingling with all this and win challenges no matter what, especially when one is a youth.*"

The district visits also required long distance travel and participants from diverse ethnicities travelled together on long road trips; a young Sinhala man from Ampara said "*I met a Tamil boy from a neighboring village when we travelled to Matara together. It was a long bus ride and there was time to get to know each other and share our thoughts and feelings. Since that trip, we have stayed in touch. He calls me often and he is helping me to learn the Tamil language*". For several participants, these friendships made with other participants from one's own district have developed and strengthened through regular interactions after the workshop. As a Sinhala woman from Ampara noted "*I still meet the Muslim ladies I met in the Eragama dialogue all the time, when I go to town, on the road etc. Earlier we didn't know them, but now we know them and they say hello and talk to us. I meet the Tamil sisters I met in the Eragama dialogue, when I go to Kovil. They come to the Kovil and we go there as well, and when we meet we talk. Earlier we didn't know them so we never talked.*"

This face-to-face engagement has helped to break down some of the mistrust between ethnicities. For example, among the youth case studies 13 out of 14 interviewed said it would be fine for them to live in an area where their ethnicity was not the majority (Table 3). Twelve out of 14 said they had no problem shopping in stores owned by people of other ethnicities, 13 said they have no problem with getting medicines from a doctor belonging to different ethnicity and all 14 said they would be fine to work for an employer from a different ethnicity to their own. However less than half felt that marriage with someone from a different ethnicity would be appropriate for themselves or their family members.

**Table 3: Youth perceptions about engaging with people from other groups**

| No | Ethnicity | Gender | Age | Living in a neighborhood where half of your neighbors are (not own group) people | Shopping at stores owned by (not own group) people | Having to work for (not own group) person | Having a close relative marry a (not own group) person | Being treated by a (not own group) doctor in an emergency situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tamil | Female | 20 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine |
| 2 | Tamil | Male | 21 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Don't ask this question | Fine |
| 3 | Tamil | Male | 30 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine |
| 4 | Sinhala | Female | 24 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Nobody in our family has been married that way. The only issue is that if a girl marries a Muslim man, that girl will have to face a lot of issues according to their religion. They have very strict laws and minimal respect for women and because of that reason I don't really like this. | Fine |
| 5 | Sinhala | Female | 20 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine |
| 6 | Sinhala | Female | 23 | I wouldn't like to live in a Muslim village. No I wont like that. The women are very restricted in those communities | After the April 21 incident, people didn't go to Muslim shops. I didn't go either. There was a story that some girls who went to the Lover (a Muslim shop) were pelted with rotten eggs. I didn't want that to happen to me, so I didn't go. But now that's not there anymore, and now I go. | Fine | Parents will not like it, so I wont like it either. Youth are impulsive but the parents' generation think long term, so we should listen to them | We go to Sinhala doctors, there are no Muslim doctors around here so I haven't really considered this. |
| 7 | Sinhala | Male | 27 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine | I went to a Muslim doctor recently and I got sick with another illness. He was not a good doctor. |
| 8 | Sinhala | Male | 22 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine | Fine |
| 9 | Sinhala | Male | 17 | Fine | I mostly buy from Sinhala shops though. I go to Muslim shops but not to buy clothes. I also eat from Muslim shops. | Fine | Nobody in the family has married like this. If my sister says that she wants to marry somebody like that I will have to see according to the situation, but I don't really like the idea. They do not match our Buddhist religion and their traditions are different from us. | Fine |
| 10 | Muslim | Female | 23 | Fine | Fine | Fine | No response | Fine |
| 11 | Muslim | Male | 20 | Fine | Fine | Fine | Don't ask this question | Fine |
| 12 | Muslim | Male | 19 | Fine | Fine | Fine | The other group person would need to convert to Islam | Fine |
| 13 | Muslim | Male | 20 | Fine | Fine | Fine | It's good. But if she could change into our religion and marry, it's good I think. | Fine |
| 14 | Muslim | Male | 20 | Fine | Fine | Fine | I personally don't mind (marrying a Sinhalese), but the people at home wont like it. Anyway, it will create a lot of problems, so may be Sinhalese shouldn't marry Muslims. | Fine |

Most new friendships and connections are with others of one's own gender. Examples abound of women creating new friendship bonds with other women, across ethnicity and even age. But there are hardly any examples of new friendships outside of one's ethnicity as well as gender, which is probably a reflection of strict cultural norms discouraging friendships between women and men outside of family. This appears to be less of an issue among youth however, and there are many instances of friendships created across gender and ethnicity, after the CMP program.

Where participants have made no connections with participants of other ethnicities, language is often the most difficult barrier to overcome. Many Sinhalese only speak Sinhala and this has been a barrier to them to make friends, but to a large extent, this is overcome by the fact that most Muslims and increasingly more Tamils, are able to speak Sinhalese. Youth on the other hand were able to use technology to bridge the language barrier. At their own initiative the youth who participated at the inter-district youth exchange visits formed WhatsApp / Viber groups after the CMP where they manage to communicate using English text as well as through visual media (Box 8). Participation is voluntary and they keep in touch on a regular basis. While the content of the group chat is not about issues relating to reconciliation and peace, there is a constant dialogue which is more focused on keeping in touch with their friends through sending wishes, memes, jokes and so on.

**Box 8: WhatsApp Group Chat of the Moneragala District Youth Visit Participants**
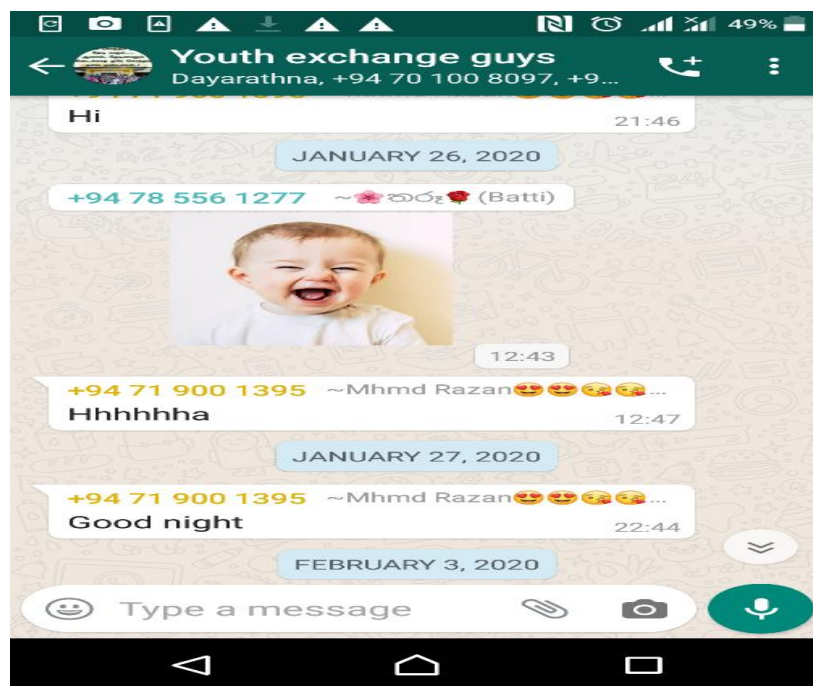
Youth, unlike adults, have greater opportunities to engage across communities. Baseline survey data with youth who participated in the first round of workshops at the inter division levels shows that 74% of Sinhala youth have visited the house of someone who was not of their own ethnicity at least once in the past 5 years (Table 1). Among adults the comparable figure is about 46%[15].

**Table 1: Youth Baseline – engaging with other communities**

| | Many times | A few times | Once | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. During the past 5 years, how often have you visited the house of someone who was not of your ethnicity?** | | | | |
| Muslim | 29% | 49% | 6% | 16% |
| Sinhala | 22% | 38% | 14% | 26% |
| Tamil | 37% | 46% | 3% | 5% |
| **2. During the past 5 years, how often have you shared a meal with someone who was not of your ethnicity?** | | | | |
| Muslim | 29% | 43% | 10% | 18% |
| Sinhala | 17% | 40% | 15% | 29% |
| Tamil | 47% | 37% | 3% | 7% |

*Source: Youth Baseline Survey*

This baseline data suggests that either youth who came for the CMP are generally more inclined to engage across ethnicities and / or that youth in general engage more across ethnicities. Case studies among youth suggest that it is both. A young Sinhalese woman from Anuradhapura said "*I usually go for social work and I have helped to build toilets and small bridges in and around our community. I make friends very easily and therefore I always make new friends no matter what ethnicity and I also maintain those friendships closely with them. I have Tamil friends that I met around 10 years ago. We were taken to Mannar and we met new friends there. Our temple monk took us there. I was in grade 9 then. We still keep in touch and they have helped me too. They could speak in both Sinhalese and Tamil so there was no communication issue. I can also speak a bit in Tamil now.*"

In all, over 3,600 people have participated in the dialogue workshops organized by the CMP in 6 out of the 25 districts in Sri Lanka. While CMP has covered less than 0.02% of Sri Lanka's population of 20 million people, those who have attended the workshops have experienced a change in knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Such changes are most significant for those who attended the dialogue workshops at all three levels who are considered as CMP 'champions'. Overall CMP 'champions' number around 450 people.

---

[15] DE team, 2018. Survey Analysis Report, Community Memorialization Project (CMP), Internal Document.

To promote greater people to people engagement, CMP Phase II also included a Small Grants scheme which were made available to participants in CMP, either as individuals or as groups, to design and implement community-level initiatives that would build peace in the project locations, and enable communities to have continued interaction and dialogues. It was hoped that these small grants would develop community resilience to withstand emerging conflicts and further develop links with participants from other communities.

There was a good response to the Small Grants scheme and communities partnered the grants by donating their labor and, in a few cases funding as well. In all, 18 small grants (3 per district) were awarded and completed. The DE team analyzed the grants in terms of whether communities interacted at the planning and implementation stage (process level) or at the end (output level). Of the 18 small grant, 4 grants were collaborative between communities during both process and output levels, while 10 were collaborative at the output level only. Four had no discernible elements to promoting people to people engagement across communities (Box 9).

**Box 9: Small Grants Scheme, by nature of collaboration**

| | | PROCESS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Collaboration among ethnicities during PROCESS | No collaboration among ethnicities during PROCESS |
| OUTPUT | Collaboration among ethnicities at OUTPUT | 1. Ampara – Gonagala alms giving event 2. Ampara - Uhanda Kovil shramadana activity 3. Matara – Hakmana Forum theater 4. Moneragala- bus stop construction | 1. Ampara - Pottuvil resting hut built in DS office 2. Mannar – Youth peace exposure visit to Trincomalee 3. Matara – Weligama Blood donation camp 4. Moneragala - Well construction 5. Anuradhapura - Tammannaelawakka Children's art program in School 6. Anuradhapura - Villacchiya Leadership and reconciliation workshop with youth 7. Kalutara - Medical camp 8. Kalutara - Cultural program 9. Kalutara – Cricket match 10. Matara – Urubokka Road construction |
| | No collaboration among ethnicities at OUTPUT | None | 1. Mannar – Adampan Water Purification Plant in Primary School 2. Mannar – Adampan Tree planting project 3. Anuradhapura - Nuwaragampalatha Renovation of community center 4. Moneragala - Thiruvalluvar Children Park at pre school |

Small grants that promoted people coming together at output level, took 3 forms: (i) where the activity is carried out by ethnicities coming together, such as the youth peace exposure visit in Mannar, the blood

donation in Weligama and forum theatre in Hakmana, Matara; (ii) future use by all three ethnicities, such as the upgrading of the Divisional Secretariat Office waiting area in Pottuvil; and (iii) people from various ethnicities came together to participate in the launch, such as the construction of drinking water wells in Moneragala. However, there is considerable variation in the quality of engagement, for example in the well construction project in Moneragala, the well is used by one ethnicity only, and the only engagement among ethnicities happened at the launch. A deeper and more meaningful engagement happened at the Gonagolla almsgiving ceremony where Muslims and Hindus joined Buddhists to serve the meal to Buddhist monks and also learned something about the Buddhist religion.

The small grants scheme also promoted engagement at the process level, where communities came together to plan and carry out the grant activity. For example, in Ampara, the partner organization facilitated a meeting of the champions, to discuss all the small grant ideas brought by champions from various areas and ethnicities. The ideas that were implemented as small grant projects were collaboratively selected through this meeting. In one of these grants, for the *Uhanda Kovil Shramadana*, participants appointed a Tamil speaking champion, who can also spoke Sinhala, to be the main coordinator to liaise with the Kovil as well as participants in different locations. The champion discussed with Tamils, Sinhala and Muslim participants over the phone about who will do what and other logistical matters, prior to the event. The ethnicities came together on the day to carry out the event. The same group came together for the Gonagolla alms giving which happened in a spirit of good collaboration because they had already gone through a collaborative process for the *Shramadana*.

The small grants were envisaged as a means of providing more opportunities for people to people engagement but did not live up to its potential due to context changes, mainly the reduced time available after the Easter bombings, but also due to miscommunication between the project team and Partners. The instructions about the small grants program were understood in different ways by the partner organizations; some partners (such as Sarvodaya) relied on their own experience of small grants and prioritized community needs rather than the CMP small grants objective of promoting engagement across divisions. More emphasis could have been placed on prioritizing people to people engagement between communities at the process level - during the planning and implementation of the small grants and not just at the output level, and also to enable participants to overcome language barriers within the group.

## Outcome: increased ability and interest of participating youth to promote non-recurrence of violence through strengthened understanding of memory, transitional justice and peacebuilding tools

Among youth who participated in CMP, there was a high level of interest to understand the causes of ethnic violence. The baseline survey shows that between 84 – 88% of youth, from all three ethnicities felt it was important to understand why the ethnic violence, war or communal clashes occurred (Table 2). There was also high levels of agreement on the importance of memory. As many as 78% of Tamil youth felt it was important to preserve the memory of what happened during ethnic violence, war or communal clashes compared to 63% among the Sinhalese and 64% among the Muslims.

**Table 2: Youth Baseline – importance of Memory**

|  | Yes | No | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Do you think it's important to understand why the ethnic violence, war or communal clashes occurred?** | | | |
| Muslim | 85% | 4% | 11% |
| Sinhala | 84% | 2% | 12% |
| Tamil | 88% | 3% | 2% |
| **2. Do you think it's important to preserve the memory of what happened during ethnic violence, war or communal clashes?** | | | |
| Muslim | 64% | 22% | 14% |
| Sinhala | 63% | 21% | 14% |
| Tamil | 78% | 14% | 2% |

*Source: Youth Baseline Survey*

While the baseline survey suggests that the youth who participated in CMP were already interested in reconciliation related activities, there is evidence of increased interest among participating youth in promoting non recurrence of violence. Out of 14 case studies, 2 youth spoke of instances where they have already had the opportunity to practice the skills they learned at the workshops to understand and rise above conflict. While one situation described involved face to face confrontations and the other occurred on social media platforms, in both situations they have engaged with people of their own community to de-escalate potential conflict.

When there is a group of like-minded youth, it appears to be easier to take decisive action to de-escalate conflict. A Sinhalese man who belongs to an active Youth Society in Moneragala narrated an incident after the Easter bombings: *"there was one person who was posting unwanted jokes on a WhatsApp group and we told him if you continue this, we will remove you from the group and he stopped immediately."* Others also felt that while they cannot act alone, they would be able to resolve conflict as a group: a

young woman from Moneragala said "*I can talk to [people engaged in a conflict] with the support of others such as my friends. Then I will have people to discuss how solve the conflict and how to execute the plans and so on. That's the meaning of the saying 'Unity is strength'.*"

There are multiple barriers and challenges which discourage youth from taking action to promote non recurrence of violence. For example, several youth respondents spoke of being ridiculed for taking a stand against racist attitudes after the Easter bombings. A Sinhalese woman from Anuradhapura said "*I usually speak up when there is some issue like this and I get scolded for doing so and I get asked if I don't care about my own kind. Such people are difficult to deal with. Some Sinhala people think that there should only be Sinhalese Buddhists and if we associate a Muslim we are called traitors.*"

Several young people spoke of the difficulties they face when they try to resolve conflicts between older adults. A young woman from Mannar said "*when the two elderly people are fighting, definitely they will say to me 'you are a child, you go to a side, your words don't matter.*' A Muslim man in Kalutara felt that the older generation has not adapted to the new context and was creating problems for everyone including the youth. "*Elders have to be told by us. This is a crazy situation – usually the elders should advise the young people. But in this case we the youth have to correct the elders. I need to speak to [an elderly gentleman who was being intolerant of others], otherwise it will happen again. Now we see the mentality of these people.*"

While only a small number of youth have had an opportunity to use the skills they have learned through CMP successfully, the majority said that they have not had such opportunities but feel they can engage if a conflict situation arose. In particular, they felt that ability to identify the cause of the conflict, the knowledge and tools to manage a conflict and techniques to de-escalate a conflict are skills that they found useful.

In one case, the youth directly linked his newfound interest and ability to engage with conflicts around him, to the CMP project. The man, who is a Muslim from Anuradhapura, said "… *I was a person who avoids [problems] and leaves the place when a problem arises. After [CMP], little by little I started thinking about the causes of the problem. Now when I see a problem, I try to act as a mediator or a judge, trying to solve that problem as far as I can.*" Another young woman said "*before [the CMP], we didn't know [how to resolve a conflict], but now I have courage as I have the knowledge*".

However, several youth pointed out that there are some conflicts they cannot resolve and that there is no point in even trying. None have so far engaged in trying to resolve conflicts with people of other ethnicities or religions. A young man from Kalutara noted "*there is no point in speaking up. Sometimes people call out bad things to us when we pass by, we laugh or look down and walk on. People who do that are not the type of people who listen, so I don't go to speak with them. I didn't speak about what happened on April 21 with anyone who is not a Muslim. Sometimes, they ridicule us and joke about things like why we wear a hat. I don't like it so I don't go to speak with them.*" A Sinhala man from Ampara echoed a similar sentiment when he said "*I cant speak to the people who haven't had this [CMP] experience. They wont understand.*"

## Strategic Objective 2: Preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience

In Phase I, the first stage of the project was devoted to collecting the life histories which form the base of the memory archive created through CMP. In all CMP was able to document 354 stories, which include letters, photos, village maps, children maps, video and audio stories, collected and uploaded in the digital archive, www.memorymap.lk.

During Phase I, CMP explored the possibility of extending dialogues and conversations about memory, memorialization and their connections to reconciliation and transitional justice, through traditional and new media as follows:

- **Workshops with media personnel:** These aimed to promote the use of *memorymap.lk* content in media outputs relating to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Three workshops were held for the specific groups of media professionals, that is print journalists, electronic journalists and social media activists/bloggers, and youth (such as the curriculum development personnel for co-existence education and in religious education). As a result of the workshops, 47 articles on topics relating to reconciliation and non-recurrence of violence were published in three languages, 8 in Sinhala, 34 in Tamil and 5 in English language.

- **Social media outreach through ROAR webzine**: Ten articles appeared in Sinhala, Tamil and English and focus on various aspects of how memorialization and stories on the *memorymap.lk* website are related to issues of transitional justice.

- **TV and Radio Talk show:** There were 7 Television episodes and 11 radio talk shows produced and aired during the course of the project. The thematic area of these talk shows were (i) civic

responsibility; (ii) focus on next generation; and (iii) value based society. The talk shows were aired thorough national and state radio and TV outlets.

Statistics indicate that the media campaigns on print, radio, TV and social media reached over two million people, with thousands of them re-sharing, particularly the content that was posted on the Facebook pages of CMP, Searchlight and ROAR. This indicates a good start towards initiating a discussion on memory and peacebuilding, which needs to be sustained. In terms of reach, the TV programs had an average audience was 333,000 per episode and radio had 263,760 per program. Written articles, particularly those that appeared on the established website ROAR, generated interesting and positive discussions on topics ranging from negative peace and positive peace, to values and empathy towards the killing of 300 people in 1958 riots. Overall however, it was clear that in the current media context, it is difficult to engage the attention of an audience long enough to communicate complex issues such as memory, memorialization and its link to reconciliation.

This learning was used to design the media strategy in Phase II which focused on developing 15 thirty second video clips in Sinhala and Tamil languages which was telecast through the 3 private TV channels. These videos were also disseminated via social media. The clips were telecast over a period of 2 months and infrequently, given the costs associated, which may have undermined the effectiveness of this strategy. None of the case study respondents recall seeing these spots. The social media dissemination of the videos probably had greater reach.

The CMP website – www.memorymap.lk – hosts the stories that have been collected in the project, and serves as a memorial in and of itself. All uploaded stories are available with Sinhala, Tamil and English translations, and have been uploaded and tagged along a map of Sri Lanka. Over 15,000 people have accessed these stories so far. In addition, the CMP leaves behind the dispersed archives in six districts; these are contained in a printed A3 version of all the stories collected in Phase I of CMP and a collection of all videos and audios in a digital format, which were presented to district and divisional libraries in project areas. Similar to the website www.memorymap.lk, the dispersed archives also serve as memorials to the experience of individuals and communities during the past 30 years.

These efforts are important and relevant given the political context within Sri Lanka that does not prioritize memory or memorialization. There are few events or activities to remember past violence and most of these are focused on one community's experience. In this context, the archives collected through

the CMP may increase in importance over time, possibly if future generations are interested in understanding and learning from the violence of the past 3 decades.

## Strategic Objective 3: Facilitate a process of common understanding on policy outlooks and programs on managing, including, and using historical memories.

During the implementation of CMP Phase I, changes in the context at the national level saw the introduction of multiple new mechanisms under the Transitional Justice (TJ) process. These include mechanisms such as the Office of Reparations which covered issues of reconciliation and historical memory. At the same time, while there was a plethora of activities at the national level, there was less attention paid by the state as well as other implementers to promote reconciliation at the grass root level. Reflecting on these context level changes using the iterative Theory of Change tool, the project team decided to replace the production of a White Paper on memory work which was planned under this objective, with multiple practice papers. This shift is also in line with the more general shift in project focus, from the  national level to local level, specifically by creating 'champions' who can promote memory work, reconciliation between communities and prevent the recurrence of violence at the local level.

In all 14 publications were issued by the CMP, of which 2 are discussion papers, 2 are practice notes, 4 are facilitation guides and 1 is a toolkit. These have been disseminated widely within the development community in the country and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that they have been used to design similar projects by other donors and other NGOs working in Sri Lanka.

# 5. What did we learn? Reflection, Lessons and Recommendations

## About promoting person to person engagement across divisions

It is now over 10 years since the end of the war and many things have changed in the country. During the war, spaces and mobility were restricted in multiple ways but now there is much greater movement of goods, people and ideas, across ethnic, religious and geographic divisions. CMP case studies show that except in a few areas in Kalutara and Moneragala, ethnicities do not live in isolation and there is engagement across ethnic and religious divisions. Communities engage with other communities when they shop, when they engage with service providers such as doctors, when they attend universities, when they go to common areas of worship and so on. However, while these connections have made people from different groups more familiar to each other and broken down some barriers, they do not often lead to deep connections of friendship. Language and lack of opportunity to meet in spaces and conditions suitable to forming such connections have acted as barriers. Exceptions can be seen in some areas in Ampara, Anuradhapura and Mannar where communities live in closer proximity to each other, language is not as much of a barrier and there are opportunities for communities to mix at social functions such as weddings and funerals.

The CMP experience shows several ways in which contact across various divisions can lead to a deeper engagement. CMP dialogue workshops were conducted under relaxed, friendly and positive conditions, there were many breaks where participants could mingle with other participants, the content focused strongly on values and eliciting the commonality of those values, and finally workshop content was activity oriented, and included many games, role plays and group work. All documents were provided in three languages and workshop facilitators were bilingual. However language remained a barrier as formal translation services were provided mainly to communicate the workshop content and rarely to promote friendship and communication between individuals. While youth found ways around this through the use of technology and social media, language was more of the barrier for adults to engage with each other as they were less likely to know a second language or the link language of English. A 56 year old Sinhala woman from Kalutara said *"I did meet many Muslim and Tamil persons but there was a massive language barrier, even with the translator. Even if we get their phone numbers, how will we speak with them? So we told the translator to tell them that we are not able to communicate because of the language."*

One of the most successful methods promoting deeper engagement was having participants from outside the district staying with a participant from another community for the duration of the district visit. The project provided financial support to the hosts to defray costs, but the level of hospitality shown by the hosts suggests that they did not do it just for the money but because they genuinely wanted to do it. Having gone through two rounds of workshops before the district visits was critical in ensuring that the hosts and guests were both of the right mindset before staying in each other's houses. The guests recall feelings of vulnerability, because they were asked to stay, sometimes alone, with strangers, but the contrast between their fear and their host's friendliness and care, acted as a catalyst for many participants to change previously strongly held negative attitudes and prejudices. Looking back on the CMP experience, bonds of friendship which appear most likely to be sustained are those created between host families and their guests (see Stories of Change in Part 6).

District visits also helped to promote deeper people to people engagement because participants travelled for long periods of time, sometimes as much as 9 hours, to get from their district to where the workshop was being held. Many hours spent travelling together in an atmosphere of a pleasure trip helped to promote friendship bonds, especially among youth participants. Because they are from the same area and they can meet again easily, these new friendships may be sustained. As one young man from Ampara noted *"I made friends on the bus, and we sat next to each other at the workshop too. One Tamil boy from my area that I met on the bus, still calls me often. When I get to know him better I am planning to visit him at his home. At the workshop itself, there wasn't much time to make new friends."*

---

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- To promote deeper connections, people to people interactions should happen over a period of time (at least several days) and be based around activities such as games, role plays, visits to places of interest and so on.
- Participants need to be encouraged to have a positive mindset about other communities before they engage with each other very closely, such as hosting a person from another community.

---

## About using memory and values to change attitudes and behavior

The starting point for CMP was collecting individual memories of violence. During CMP Phase I, 354 stories, which include letters, photos, village maps, children maps, video and audio stories, were collected and uploaded in the digital archive and preserved in dispersed archives. CMP has gone beyond archiving

memories to using these memories to promote reconciliation. The series of workshops with project participants began by focusing on one's own memories which acted as a catharsis to open up and feel empathy when in the next stage when other people's memories of violence are shared. As a 58 year old Tamil woman from Ampara said *"I have shared my personal story. Personally I have a lot of worries. I released these worries through sharing my story. Later, I realized people are living with a lot of worries and problems. Compared to those issues and worries, mine are noting (thoosu - dust)".* Awakening memories of personal experiences can create catharsis, and also empathy towards others who have experienced violence to varying degrees.

In many cases, when the participants from one community are faced with personal histories and memories of other communities, it requires them to face uncomfortable realities, that their version of 'truth' may not be the only truth. For example, inter-district visits compelled them to confront the violence perpetrated on others by their own community. Sinhalese visiting the site of a grenade attack on a church by the Navy or Tamils visiting the site of the massacre of 28 Buddhist monks by the LTTE were forced to revisit their black and white view of the war, with clearly identified "good" and "bad / evil" parties. This muddying of how the war is perceived, breaks down some of the mental barriers and increases the openness to hear multiple truths. For many, especially in the south, it may be an important milestone in the journey towards accepting and acknowledging the suffering of others due to the war. As a 68 year old Sinhala man from Matara said *"people were able to release grievances which were deep rooted until now. I also felt that the stories were true, and all this time we heard what the TV said, but these were heartfelt stories coming from the people themselves... I think these stories may be true.*" When memories are shared in person at the location where the incident happened, there is greater receptivity to it. However, not everyone was equally open to hearing other 'truths' and set a high bar to accept them. As a 67 year old Sinhala man from Moneragala said "*showing is always better than just trying to convince people through talking. When explaining what happened in our village, it was good the blood stains were still there at the house where the incident happened so these people who came from other areas could see them. We also went to another village where a man from there explained what had happened to them. To my mind, the incident he related was not very clear. They didn't have anything to show as such. We just listened to him. I think that incident was not as serious as what happened here."*

CMP also uses common values as the entry point to imagine the future the participants wanted, on the basis that shared 'Sri Lankan' values may be an entry point to developing resilience and agency at individual and village level. This conversation on values generated a good response at the workshops. As the *ex post* survey at the end of Phase I showed, there is commonality among the 3 ethnicities in terms the

values they prioritize; for example, respect, patience and humanity was valued by all three ethnicities. The dialogue workshops helped to bring this commonality out and also to draw a link with preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. When survey respondents were asked "if these values that you have identified earlier are shared across ethnic, religious, political divisions, do you think it will be easier to prevent violent conflict?" 99% of Tamils, 90% of Sinhalese and 80% of Muslims said yes.

Overall, the logic of the dialogue workshops, which built on each session, was validated: The dialogue process of: - a) expressing one's own story, b) seeing others' stories, c) building on empathy felt for each other towards expressing the need for non-recurrence of violence, d) agreeing that a value-based society will help towards this and identifying simple, practical values for co-existence and peace in daily life – was validated in the responses and level of engagement from participants across the districts. Participants specifically noted that the structure and content of the workshops, helped to change their attitudes. As one young man from Moneragala noted "*we need to have the first day to change our mindset. Then on the second day we went to Madugalle and Talaimannar to listen to the injustices done to a Muslim lady. In my opinion we need to listen and to see, in order to understand. Both are important.*"

---

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Sharing memories is cathartic and also provides a base to connect across divisions.
- Envisioning the future as a value-based society and what that should look like, helps to bring out the commonality across divisions
- It is not enough only to talk about memories, or only to show places where events have occurred. Both elements are necessary in order to make the memories 'real' for outsiders, which will help them to understand and change their attitudes.

---

## About engaging with youth for non-recurrence

There is a general consensus within Sri Lanka that in order to reduce the possibility of violence recurring in the future, the lessons from past eras of violence need to be communicated to the youth. But at the same time there is a danger that bringing up past events can lead to reigniting feelings of anger and hatred against 'the other' among a new generation of youth, which in turn can lead to new conflicts. As a Muslim man from Matara said "*the generation after 2009 knows war only as a history lesson. They have examples from other countries (Syria, Yeman) and they think war would have been similar in Sri Lanka. It is good that we tell them what happened, but we have to do it in such a way that we don't instigate anger in children's*

*minds. Memory fades overtime."* The CMP experience is valuable in that sense because it shows how the youth can be engaged on this issue at a deeper level, but without leading new conflicts.

The CMP shows that there is a sizable cohort of youth interested in learning more about Sri Lanka's violent past, as well as engaging in activities to promote peace and reconciliation between communities. By and large, those who participated in the workshops tend to be those who were already interested in these topics; for example, respect, humanity, understanding, patience and coexistence were values youth prioritized at baseline, where as many as 85% also said that if given the opportunity they would prefer to live in mixed community neighborhood. They have also had some experience in engaging with other communities often on social work; as many as 55% had worked collaboratively on some activity with people belonging to other communities. However, the main attraction for youth to participate in CMP was the opportunity to meet other, like-minded, youth and make friends. They were also attracted by the prospect of a trip to another part of the country.

While youth participated in numbers at workshops, the question of what they learned through the workshops, remains. Did they learn conflict resolution skills, can they prevent conflict, did they learn to deal with hate speech especially on social media? The participating youth demonstrated a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of conflict resolution they learned at the workshops, but only 2 out of 14 case study respondents said that they have already had the opportunity to put this knowledge into practice. This is disappointing, given that 2019 was a year of heightened tension between communities, especially after the Easter bombings. It is possible that youth do not have the capacity to see opportunities to engage and it may be necessary for workshop capacity building to include this element. Overall, skills building should be more practical, more hands-on, and draw more from real life examples so that the youth can see their applicability to their own lived circumstances better.

It would also be helpful to find ways to reinforce the CMP messages once the workshops end. This could include helping to build networks of support, among participating youth as well as by connecting them to other existing networks of like-minded youth, so that youth can support and help each other engage to reduce and mitigate local level conflict, for example to push back against hate speech on social media. In CMP, it was hoped that such networks would arise organically, but the project experience suggests that a more proactive approach may be required to explore whether the networks that do arise, can become something more than forums for keeping in touch with each other.

There are barriers that youth face when attempting to engage to de-escalate or resolve conflict at the local level, which should be acknowledged and addressed in workshops. One major barrier is that cultural norms in Sri Lanka strongly act against youth getting involved in conflicts between adults. There is a distance between youth and adults which many youth find difficult to bridge. Youth trying to engage in such conflicts can inadvertently escalate a conflict and end up causing more harm than good. Workshops can provide space for youth and adults to come together to explore how to overcome these cultural barriers and norms. For example, intergenerational discussions during workshops have taken the form of passing memories from one generation to another, but it can be expanded to include an intergenerational discussion of conflict resolution. As youth have noted, most of the conflicts at the local level are between adults and if they are to engage in these conflicts they need the skills and capacity to do so.

---

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- Skills development for youth should be provided through hands-on experience of engaging with conflict, especially on social media.
- Youth should be supported to learn how to engage positively in conflicts between adults, and they should be trained in aspects of Do-No-Harm as well.
- More needs to be done after workshops end, to promote networking and developing structures of mutual support between participating youth.

---

## About promoting reconciliation in a dynamic context

CMP raises interesting questions about engaging at the grass roots level to promote reconciliation and prevent the recurrence of violence. It shows clearly that there is still insufficient opportunity for people to engage meaningfully across ethnic and other divisions in Sri Lanka. There is greater contact between communities, but this is superficial and without much understanding and appreciation of diversity, which is dangerous and can lead to new conflicts developing. For example, a Sinhalese woman in Ampara reacted to rumors about the Muslim community by noting that many young men in her village frequent Muslim restaurants and are also childless. *"I believe that the story about the abortion pills is very true. There are many young families in this village who do not have children. There must be some truth in this story, that is the only possible explanation. This must be the reason. One of the couples has been tested and it is a problem with the husband. He, as did many of the young men in our village, used to frequent a Muslim shop to have their soup on a regular basis. This must be the reason".* Such stories were repeated by several case study respondents, which suggests that what engagement there is across divisions in Sri

Lanka at present, is largely insufficient to break down deeply held mistrust or act as a buffer against rumors and other potential conflict triggers.

The CMP is also based on the idea that a few people with skills and interest in mitigating or transcending conflict can counteract aggressive elements at a grassroots level. These 'champions' are the target of the CMP dialogue workshops and skill building. There is some evidence from case studies to suggest that these champions are in fact coming forward to mitigate and de-escalate conflict but these conflicts are usually small scale and often within their own communities. A 43 year old Muslim woman from Mannar recounted an incident as follows: *"In my family, a conflict got worse. Two males were about to beat two girls. At that situation I tried my level best to stop it. I tried my maximum to solve it peacefully. But they didn't give a chance to me and didn't even listen to me. So I called the police. I tried my level best to stop the violence and prevent those girls from the violence, but the men didn't listen to me. So, as my last option I called the police."* There are incidents recounted by youth champions in relation to de-escalating conflicts over social media such as on WhatsApp groups. These efforts suggest that the champions are attempting to understand and engage with conflicts in their own community groups, and bodes well that they may develop from there to working towards non-recurrence of violence at a larger scale. However there is also a very real danger that unless they are supported with greater skills, hands-on experience and encouragement of like-minded others, these champions may disengage over time.

While the CMP focused on looking back and understanding conflicts in the past with a view to developing skills to recognize early warning signs of new conflicts, the dynamic nature of the country context often means new conflicts take on new forms and occur in new spaces. CMP shows that many people in Sri Lanka are ignorant of each other's experiences and the root causes of conflict, which the project helped to address albeit in a small scale. The links of friendship that have developed across ethnic and other divisions may help to spread greater awareness of how events and policies affect groups scattered across various parts of the country. For example during the anti-Muslim reaction after the Easter bombings, some CMP champions have attempted to cross check rumors with friends they met during workshops. Through their contact with people from other communities, they are able get another perspective, which strengthens them against manipulation by outsiders. In many cases, there is progress in their attitudes; from condemning an entire ethnic or religious group, some champions have progressed to concluding that everyone within a given community is not the same and it is often a few extremist individuals who create the problems.

The case studies also show that people are capable of having individual friends they like and respect from another ethnic group, while at the same time condemning that ethnic group as a community. One champion from Moneragala spoke about new Muslim friends she has made and with whom she is regularly in touch, and in the same conversation said *"No we will not work with Muslims. We believe that they will do damage to us. We don't have a big issue about Tamils. But about Muslims we have a feeling like they are dangerous and we feel that they cannot be trusted."* These attitudes where the community is seen as separate from individuals, undermine the extent to which creating people-to-people connections can act as buffers to reduce conflict at the national level.

As a country, the Sri Lankan context presents a complex system. There are multiples of actors and multiples of interest at stake and causes and effects are linked in multiple ways. In such a complex and dynamic system, inability of the evaluators to link the workshops and champions created by CMP with reconciliation and non-recurrence of violence, should not be taken to mean that such linkages are not there or will never be there. Cause and effect are rarely linear in complex systems and the knowledge, skills and connections created through the CMP can become the base of positive action in future.

<div style="border:1px solid #4472C4; padding:10px;">

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- More initiatives are needed to encourage people to people engagement across divisions under suitable conditions, as interactions that are happening organically can lead to worsening mistrust and tensions.
- Support the champions to build their knowledge and conflict resolution skills by engaging with small scale conflicts in their own communities, before engaging with large scale conflict at the national level.
- Encourage people to use their personal contacts to cross check rumors and media stories, to avoid being manipulated by forces with other agendas.

</div>

## About project implementation structures

Promoting reconciliation and non-recurrence of violence in the immediate aftermath of a conflict is a difficult and fraught undertaking. Much was learned about the context and what will work and what will not, after implementation had already begun. Because Phase I was implemented over a 32 month time span, there was sufficient time to reflect and course correct, but learning in Phase II was undermined by the shorter implementation period due to the Easter bombings and subsequent restrictions.

CMP experience underlines the need for a project team that is open to learning and adaptation. At the start of Phase I, there was very little interest in learning and reflecting within the project team, who were very much focused on the design and implementation of the project. It was clear that in their minds, the project was one thing and capturing the learning was another. There was an underlying wariness of M&E among the project team. However, as the project progressed and M&E data and analyses started becoming available to the project team, this wariness gradually dissolved. Over time, project team members started to proactively request for the designing of feedback mechanisms around project activities, as well as request for the analysis of such data to help plan future phases of the project. However, in Phase II the composition of the team changed and the content lead position was separated from the team leader position. Partly due to the change in team structure and partly due to time restrictions, the emphasis in Phase II shifted somewhat from learning towards delivering the outputs. Space for reflection, a strong emphasis in Phase I, reduced in Phase II which also undermined the learning culture as well as the continuing process of innovation. The small grants program, which was a new activity in Phase II, was particularly affected as there was little space or time to reflect and adjust before it was fully rolled out.

When the project is a pilot initiative, venturing into a complex and fluid environment, the monitoring and evaluation approach can provide much needed support. The CMP started off as an idea, to build on the experience, learning and impact of the HerStories project. The project team had extensive experience on story collection and dissemination, and well tested tools for this purpose. However, very little was articulated about what can be done with the stories once they are collected to generate a dialogue, at micro, meso or macro levels and how to systematically capture feedback from participants and changing context. Because the CMP used a DE approach, the M&E team was already on board and was able to provide support to help articulate the project thinking as well as ensure a continuous stream of feedback to help the team understand the reception to project activities. In Phase II, some of the activities piloted in Phase I such as the dialogue workshops at the village, division and district level, were scaled up and DE activities focused on the new activities such as youth engagement. However, CMP Phase II experience suggests that the scale up of a model, even when it has been well tested, should also have been supported at the same level of intensity by the DE. New locations as well as context changes meant that many aspects of the model needed to be tweaked during implementation and should have been rolled out in the same way as in Phase I, with reflexivity built in and supported by the DE.

Throughout the life of CMP, there was an unresolved tension stemming from the mismatch between the capacity of Partners and the tasks they were required to carry out. CMP encountered difficulties in finding the right partner – one who has the correct balance of local knowledge, recognition and trust, and who has

the ability to understand and effectively implement a project of this nature. This was further exacerbated by the fact that Partner Organizations were primarily selected as logistical partners, to help roll out CMP activities at the community level, and not for their capacity to engage at a conceptual level. As a result, the Partners underwent a steep learning curve, and despite efforts to explain the project in meeting setting, full understanding often came much later when they witnessed the actual implementation. In Phase II this was addressed by rolling out implementation, allowing for Partners to witness implementation of new activities in other areas before planning theirs. The transfer of learning was also hampered to some extent by inadequate staffing, often necessitating a single staffer to handle multiple activities at the same time, and rapid turnover of staff among Partner Organizations. In Phase II, the number of Partner Meetings, to discuss the project concepts and activities as well as learn from each other, was increased to address this issue but did not completely resolve the problem due to time constraints.

---

**LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Projects that are attempting innovation in complex and fluid contexts need to have a medium to long term time horizon, with reflexivity built into the design.
- Project team needs to be open to learning and adaptation. When the project is a pilot initiative, venturing into a complex and fluid environment, the monitoring and evaluation approach can provide much needed support. Even scale up of tested models should be well supported by M&E, to learn and adapt to changes in context.
- Developmental Evaluation is a useful way to provide support to an implementation team engaging in a complex context and on sensitive issues such as reconciliation. However, turnover of implementation staff can undermine the buy-in to the DE methodology and consequently, the value that DE can bring to a project. There should be regular reflection with implementation staff, to help new staff understand DE, how it is being operationalized in the project and their role in, and expectations of, DE.
- Selection of partners should prioritize their experience working in similar content, as much as their local knowledge and networks. When they have no background in memory work or conflict related issues, adequate resources should be set aside to ensure that this gap is addressed as soon as possible.

# 6. Stories of change

This final section contains a selection of stories from the case studies carried out by the DE team, during Phase I and Phase II of the CMP. In all 65 case studies were completed (28 in Phase I and 37 in Phase II). The stories presented in this section are not meant to be representative but were selected to show the variance in the backgrounds and experiences of the case study respondents. Individual case studies are particularly important as the kind of change that CMP hoped to achieve is difficult to capture in surveys and other quantitative data. These stories illustrate how CMP participants engaged with the project as well as how they reacted to project activities. The changes in their knowledge, attitudes and behavior due to what they experienced through CMP are presented in their own words.

## From apathy to champion: The story of Amarapala

For many Sinhalese living in the South, the experiences of those living in the north and east during the war remain abstract. Despite Sri Lanka being a small country in terms of geography, there is a separation between places such as Matara and Samanthurai that is about more than the distance involved.

For Amarapala, a 68 year old, Sinhala man living in Beliwatta, Matara, the war was something that he did not experience directly. His perceptions of the war were shaped by what he saw, heard and read on the television and newspapers. He has no relatives or friends living in the north or the east; while he has visited Jaffna soon after the war ended, that trip had hardly any interaction with the locals. He has a young son in the Navy and he is sympathetic to the armed forces, and early in his involvement with the project, his views of the conflict were largely black and white, with the LTTE clearly the instigator capable of great harm - "*because of these things even the Tamil people were against them*"; the armed forces on the other hand are seen as above reproach - "*it is not nice to talk about the army like that because they went through a lot of hardships during the war.*"

While he was open minded and wanted to know more about the experiences of the people of the north and east, he was apathetic about his role in promoting reconciliation: "*What can we do when we can't even complete our own work. We can't change the country. There is nothing that we can do personally ... It is difficult for us to do anything by ourselves, there is no point in us talking to the media as individuals either.*" The project provided Amarapala with an opportunity to attend several workshops with people of his own area as well as others, visit Samanthurai in the East, and live in the house of a Tamil family for 2 days. After this visit to the East, the difference in his attitudes and perception was marked. He was energized by the topic in a way he was not before and he was eager to share his experiences with others in his family and

village, emphasizing the new and previously unknown elements of what he experienced. *"I started to compare my situation with them. We make a big deal out of small things, but they have suffered throughout their life. They have survived these difficult situations. These are unheard stories that are often not shared by the media."*

He felt an empathy towards his hosts that was a far cry from what he felt when his knowledge of these experiences were mediated through the media: *"I felt sad they had little to no experience in mingling with society, probably not gone outside the district. They had faced war for years and they are still trapped in that environment. That man is 60 years, and war was 30 years; half of his life he has lived with war... We spoke about what happened during the war, it was sad to listen to them. When the war was intense, they used to sleep in the middle of paddy fields so that neither parties (LTTE/ army) could see, covering themselves with polythene paper for rain."*

His black and white understanding of the conflict was also affected and he was able to hear about incidents perpetrated by the Armed forces without getting agitated, and accept that they too may have harmed and harassed innocent civilians.

The most striking change however is in how he sees his role in promoting reconciliation. Where there was apathy now there is agency. Previously he was sanguine about not being able to speak Tamil or converse in depth with other ethnicities, being perfectly satisfied that he understood enough through sign language. Now he feels the need to have actual conversations and understands the language barrier as his own shortcoming. "*We managed to have a conversation, despite the language barrier. They could also talk a little bit of Sinhalese. I feel bad for not learning Tamil. I know very little. Older people are not keen to learn, they also don't think that is important to learn Tamil."*

From his own experience, he understands the power of what he can do. He goes on to say:
*"Making peace is a bottom up process. When there are stronger bonds of friendships at ground level, we will also start to question politically motivated conflicts. We will start asking who we are fighting with. For example, if a conflict happens, I would want to make sure Raj (the family he met in Samanthurai) is safe, and he of me. The mutual bonding begins, if that continues this problem would not be there. Conflict resolution is a voluntary act. If people are more humane, these issues will not arise."*
From thinking of himself as a victim or bystander, Amarapala has progressed over the course of the project to think of himself as an agent of change. He sees the value of bonds created at the ground level and how that can develop into a wider force working towards the non-recurrence of violence.

## "I need to correct myself": The story of Vajira

Vajira is a 47 year old Sinhalese woman from Urubokka, a village in the interior of the Matara District in the couth of Sri Lanka. She is intelligent and articulate, and she was able to put into words how the CMP experience affected her.

*"The [village level dialogue workshop] in Urubokke was something new for me. It was not about ordinary, day to day issues that we generally talk about. Although there are programs done by local NGOs and other institutions, they did not work on this particular issue. No one approached us to listen to us. Many people in the village participated and they were happy that there was an opportunity to share experiences with each other. It was a new experience for all.*

*[The project] got a voice recording from me because I was very much affected by the JVP violence. The Urubokke program refreshed memories of that violent era. I felt that for a group of our own people to be so violent against us, there has to be something terribly wrong. I was very - angry with the system. My education was disrupted. My relations were lost, my younger sister suffered a lot, my mother almost went insane and this issue affected our family situation. My sister way very young when that happened, she was 3 years old, and we could not feed her properly. We had tea lands and they destroyed the factory, roads and overall the household economy. While the rich could cope because they had money, contacts and resources, people at the bottom tier found it difficult to get up and move on. They suffered mentally and physically.*

*In the program we were able to talk openly about what happened. For a very long time I kept a deep-rooted anger inside me, because the violence took my education and it totally changed our life. It is always good to let out the pain of memories rooted in you and the dialogues provided a good platform. We also feel like adding and contributing our story, while absorbing other people's experiences. We have to release these thoughts, address our weaknesses and correct ourselves. Now when I talk, I'm not in pain because now I know that others (Muslims, Tamils) have gone through the same or more. When I listened to those stories, my pain thinned and became more subdued.*

*Ethnic, religious and caste-based labelling and division is very prevalent in rural areas and people try to divide each other for various reasons. For the first time the idea that we should correct ourselves and that we should not divide ourselves like this, came to me on that day [in*

*Urubokke]. Then when I saw the information shared at the Matara workshop, showing how others were affected by war and violence, it was very convincing and I felt that even more strongly. By the time I went to Ampara, I was quite convinced that I had to change my perceptions and correct myself".*

She went on to talk about the district visit to Ampara and what she felt during that experience:

*"Prior to this, I had been to Mannar with my daughter, for a leadership development program by another local NGO.  We stayed in a Tamil house. My first reflection, that I need to correct myself, came to me on that visit.  But I did not know how to implement such a change. There was no pressing need for us to start a friendship with that family. We stayed, we talked, and then we parted.  But [the inter district visit to] Ampara was different. When we went there, they were waiting for us and welcomed us very warmly. Here, there is no custom to take your visitor's bags, but there they took our bags, held hands and took us to their house. They were more warm and welcoming than our own people.*

*My daughter stayed in a Tamil house and I stayed in a Muslim house in Kalmunai. We could not converse; my host was talking, and I was just nodding.  But they somehow understood our ideas, without words. Maybe they connected with feelings, for example they showed us the washroom if we wanted to go. By about the second day, we were slowly talking their language and were able to converse the essentials. By the third day we were talking about our experiences in war. From the words they expressed I felt that they had also suffered like us. We still keep in contact and talk to each other in broken language, we call ourselves akka/nangi (elder sister / younger sister) and ask about what is happening in each other's areas.*

*The lived experience of the visits made us understand the real story. It was different to hearing it from the TV. Learning by living their life is different to hearing their story from a third party. We learnt by their experience."*

As part of the visit to Ampara, she visited Aranthalawa which has a graphic memorial erected in memory of the 28 Buddhist monks killed by the LTTE during the war.

*"In Aranthalawa I was in so much pain. We are Buddhists and respect monks like they are gods. I was very shocked, I was sad and angry. Later when I saw the other incidents at the kovil and in*

*Samanthurai, I felt that Aranthalawa was only one incident among many other incidents, and my anger went away.*

*I think that monument is valuable. The memory of those incidents should not fade away with time, they should be kept for younger generation to remember but not to instigate anger. If you first see it with no background information you get angry. But if you know the incident you don't get angry when you see it."*

Overall she feels that the Sinhalese as a race, need to change the way they think.

*"During the visit, we went to Aranthalawa, Samanthurai, and to a Kovil. We saw the property damage and we got to know about the lives that were lost. I felt that we are a weak race. We should be able to understand – it is our weakness that we do not. You have to feel the pain of other people.*

*We should be like one, we should shed all our ethnic, caste, religious differences and we should involve everybody. Tamil people should come to big positions in the country, we should aim to have Tamils as President or Prime Minister. They should be given the chance to talk. When we find Sinhalese in high up positions we feel good. Those Tamil people should also feel the same way. We are the majority but they should also be given the chance. Our opinion gets prioritized, just because we are big in numbers.*

*We need to change our (racist) attitudes. The process of correcting ourselves should start from schools, at a very young age. It is good if there is an opportunity to learn Tamil for adults. The small children learn it at school. Adults don't have much opportunity. We feel helpless because we do not understand what they are saying. They understood our feelings and needs very quickly but we could not understand their feelings, emotions and needs because we did not know their language. I also noticed that the Tamil people are very skilled. They talk our language very fluently. At that point I felt we are a weak race because we only talk one language and we don't try to absorb the good in other people.*

Finally she said:

*Programs like this should be scaled up at national level and start in schools, dhamma (Buddhist religious) schools and religious institutions. If there is support from the government like how you all are supporting this effort, then definitely things will change."*

## Awareness of others' experiences as a basis for change: The story of Vijayaluxmi

Vijayaluxmi, a 47 year old Tamil woman from Samanthurai, has had a difficult life due to direct impacts of the war. She lost both her parents when she was very small, and went to live with an aunt from a young age. She was not able to study under the circumstances and her education did not progress far. Within a few days of her marriage she was displaced from her village to another village. Soon after, her husband was abducted while he was away selling fish and she has no information about what happened to him. Isolated within her part of the country and without access to much information about what was happening elsewhere, Vijayaluxmi thought that their situation was unique and that no one else had to face the problems they had. Through the CMP, Vijayaluxmi had the opportunity to interact with people from other ethnicities. Speaking with the Sinhalese from her own district was a new experience for her and they shared what they went through during the war. In the process she realized that both ethnicities had suffered:

> *"During the dialogue Kanthi Akka (a Sinhalese woman also from Ampara) told me that the LTTE had slaughtered more than 50 people in her village one night. I did not know that such a brutal massacres had happened to the Sinhalese. Before participating in the dialogues and taking with them, I used to think that they are Sinhalese, they have the protection of the security forces, what harm would have happened to them?"*

Vijayaluxmi realized that the Sinhalese were also equally ignorant about the experiences of the Tamils. When she said to the Sinhalese people she met at the dialogue workshops that she thought they had not experienced the worst effects of the war, she says they said the same thing back to her:

> *"I have told them directly and openly that I thought they didn't have to experience the terrible effects from this war. In turn Kanthi Akka said they thought the same. But after she participated in the dialogue she realized the difficulties faced by the Tamils."*

The similarity of their experiences as well as the similarity of the way they thought, created a shared bond helping these women from opposing sides to overcome barriers and become friends.

In the process, the way Vijayaluxmi used to think about the Sinhalese community has changed. Before she took part in the dialogues, her mentality was prejudiced due to her own experiences with the conflict, and she thought the Sinhalese hated her community. After she took part in the dialogue workshops, she changed her mind. She says *"now I think they like us"*

Vijayaluxmi understands the value of remembering in order for others to become aware and to understand the incidents that happened, as well as to develop sympathy and empathy for the suffering of others. She says:

> *"We didn't know what happened to them. After seeing all the incidents and sharing experiences I know what has happened to them and I think it is the same for the Sinhalese as well. They all came forward and showed their issues and effects by drawing maps. Otherwise we do not know. I didn't know who else was affected. Until I saw those stories I didn't believe that Sinhalese people were affected. Now I know that Sinhalese people have been affected. So while we are sharing and seeing the past we should take care to prevent the same in future"*

## Conflict resolution at the local level: The story of Mumtaz

Mumtaz is a 38 year old Muslim woman living in Mannar. She is the mother of 3 school age children. She has never been employed outside of her home. Instead, she volunteers for the village Women's Society, working as its secretary for 4 years, and is currently its president.

Mumtaz says she heard many stories of how people suffered during the war at the dialogue workshops. While they had heard similar stories before taking part in the workshops, for her the real value of the workshops was in learning how they can prevent such tragedies in future. "*We learned about what kind of values and initiatives we should take as individuals. We should live with understanding. You see, the so called ethnic problem was started due to misunderstanding and due to lack of understanding. If they (Tamils and Sinhalese) could understand about each other we would have prevented these tragedies and losses."*

She notes specific sessions and activities during the workshop which helped her to understand better. *"The role play was very good. What I realized was that __we__ are the main cause for escalating any kind of issue. I saw that in the role play a minor issue that could have been solved by the GN, escalated up to large scale."*

Mumtaz goes on to recount an incident where she was able to use the learning from the workshop.

> *"I used the learning in my life. Last night there was a quarrel between Muslim and Tamil neighbors. This quarrel was caused due to a Muslim's woman's cow damaging a Tamil woman's paddy field. The Tamil woman explained that they are doing this cultivation under tremendous difficulties, without enough water and incurring a huge cost on obtaining water through pumps. When she*

*heard this, the Muslim woman went to the Tamil woman's house and apologized for what happened. She made sure to tie their cow to a tree before she left the village to go to the hospital. While the Muslim woman was away, the Tamil woman had recounted the story to her son, who was visiting from Jaffna. He had escalated the conflict by starting a quarrel with the Muslim family and arguing with them. So I went there and told them we should live together and not fight for small things. I explained to them about the consequences of conflict, as I had learned from the dialogue workshops. They listened to me and they became quiet, and the quarrel ended and they all went away"*

While she is only one person and her influence may not spread beyond the village, Mumtaz's experience shows that individuals at the local level can act effectively and in a timely way to reduce conflict, especially to reduce the potential for small arguments to escalate into big conflicts.

## "I don't need to follow what others are doing": The story of Ahamed

Ahamed is a 20 year old Muslim male from Kalutara. He lives in Dharga Town, an area made famous as the location of anti-Muslim riots in 2014. He has just completed his Advanced Level exam and is looking to go aboard. "*My brother is working abroad and I am trying to go aboard too. First to a gulf country and then from there hopefully to Europe. I want to start a business and I need capital to do that. You can't find capital by working in Sri Lanka so I want to go abroad. But I will come back because I want to start a business here. I tried to get a job here, but there are no jobs in Dharga town so I have to travel out. When I go up and down by bus I am so tired, I can't do anything else. I can't work like that and the pay is not enough either. So I think the best thing is to go abroad.*" Ahamed is soft spoken and quiet. Being one of the younger children in a family of 9, he is close to his mother with whom he shared the experiences he had through the CMP.

Despite his mother tongue being Tamil, Ahamed has done his Advanced Level in Sinhala. "*When I studied in the Sinhala medium for my A/Ls, I knew the Sinhala language better and I had Sinhalese friends. I feel sad that now I can't remember the language as well and have completely lost touch with the Sinhalese friends I met in school. Now I only speak with Sinhala people when we go to the beach a few times a week to play ball. I don't associate with Sinhalese people now. It was only during the CMP program that I associated with them.*"

Living within a Muslim enclave which is surrounded by the Sinhalese majority, the events after the Easter bombings had a profound effect on his day to day life.

*"After the Easter bombings, people would look at us funny when we went to Sinhala areas. A friend of mine from Aluthgama had a lot of Sinhala friends, who he associated very closely with. After April 21, he said they changed and called him Thambi (a derogatory word for Muslims). He said "however much you associate with them, this is what happens in the end". He was very disillusioned and has distanced himself from all his Sinhala friends. I go to the beach to play ball a few times a week, with my friends. The people in that area are Sinhala, and after the Easter bombings they treat us differently. They won't let us play ball there. They scolded us and told us not to come to play there. When we kept going, they got dogs who would run off with our ball. So now we can't play. Now they don't scold us like before, but still they tell us not to play ball there. We also used to play football in the grounds. The Sinhala boys play cricket and we play football. They prefer cricket so they don't play with us, though we let them play with us if they ask. We used to play till late, sometime 8 or 10 pm in the night. But the Sinhala boys have told the people who look after the grounds and now they won't keep the lights on so we can play."*

Ahamed was happy associating entirely within his own community but the CMP program took him outside of his usual group of friends and introduced him to new friends. *"I made a lot of new friends. Even (a Sinhala youth from Kalutara) I had not met before, and now we are friends. I have not associated that closely with Sinhalese and Tamils before this. But I saw that there was not much difference in food and the way we all are. Everyone is human. When you met them you realize that it's not what others say. Even though we were from different ethnicities and religions, we lived together as humans."*

He felt that in addition to showing him parts of the country he has never been to, such as Moneragala in the East and Mannar in the North, the CMP program has taught him about historical events he has no idea about. "*The district visit was what I liked best. I didn't know about the JVP and the visit to the Manamperi location affected me very much. When I came home I asked my family and others about this and only then heard about similar problems that had happened in our area in the 1980s."* The CMP experience has also made him vary about social media; "*I learned that I don't need to do what everyone else is doing. I don't need to follow what others are doing. For example, on social media, I think we shouldn't share something as soon as we get it. We should check if it is true. If we don't hear anything more about it and we can't be sure if it is true, we should just forget about it. We need to investigate before believing."*

Despite what he learned at the CMP, Ahamed was not keen to use his conflict resolution skills on day to day issues he faced with people outside his community. "*There is no point in speaking up. Sometimes people call out bad things to us when we pass by, we laugh or look down and walk on. People who do that are not the type of people who listen, so I don't go to speak with them. I didn't speak about what happened*

*on April 21 with anyone who is not a Muslim. Sometimes, they ridicule us and joke about things like why we wear a hat. I don't like it so I don't go to speak with them."*

However what he is willing to do is to speak up within his own community, to reduce what he feels is needlessly provoking behavior among adults within his own community. When an elderly Muslim gentleman objected harshly to allowing women and people of other ethnicities to come inside their mosque grounds, Ahamed was very upset and insisted that he will go and speak with the man to explain. "*Elders have to be told by us. This is a crazy situation – usually the elders should advise the young people. But in this case we the youth have to correct the elders. I need to speak to him, otherwise it will happen again. Now we see the mentality of these people. He is an outsider, what right does he have to come and tell me off? Our mosque is different, women have been allowed inside the mosque. We even have Open Mosque days where anyone can come in. This could have triggered a big incident. The older generation is living in a fantasy, make believe world.*"

While Ahamed may not be willing to intercede with people outside of his community during a conflict, he has shown that he is willing to intercede with people within his own community, to de-escalate the situation and potential for violence. This is a very promising development; unless he retreats back inside his own community when there are no more programs such as CMP to provide opportunities to engage with others, Ahamed may well become a champion for conflict resolution in an area prone to high levels of ethnic tension and violence.

## Gaining confidence to engage in conflict resolution: The Story of Sharika

Sharika is a 43 year old Muslim woman from Mannar. She is the mother of four grown children and her husband is fisherman, who operates a rented boat. She has studied up to O/Ls but has married young, which effectively ended her education. Since her marriage her husband has not allowed her to go outside their home to find employment, but now that her children are grown, she engages in social work in her village. She feels that she has a good understanding with her husband but there are still some constraints about her movements; "*my husband understands me. He has told me that if I have to go somewhere for social services to let him know beforehand. I have the freedom to go anywhere but I have to be home before six in the evening. Wherever I go I am also supposed to take my daughter with me. This is mostly for her protection, I do not allow her to stay at home alone.*"

Before the CMP, Sharika has participated in programs conducted by Sarvodaya and also other NGOs, on reconciliation. Through these programs as well as the CMP, she has gained many experiences and has

stayed in Tamil and Sinhala houses and has had Sinhala students staying in her house. She does not speak Sinhala well and she feels that there is a language barrier to forming closer friendships, in particular in the Sinhala community but she also says "*honestly speaking, there were language barriers but somehow we managed it. I can understand Sinhala a little and I can manage the language. When my new friends call me at home, and if I can't manage to understand certain words and phrases, I ask for help from husband.*" She goes on to say that she has seen many new faces and made new friends, who feel like part of her family, through this program.

Sharika feels that through the CMP she was able to gain a wider understanding of what happened during the war. She says "*I got to know what people experienced and I came across worse situations than we experienced in our past. In the South too, they faced many difficulties, damages and loses which were caused by a conflict with a political party in Sri Lanka called the JVP.*" She felt that showing pictures was very effective as it was easy to understand very quickly what had happened; "*we were able to understand the real situation of the war which caused many deaths in our country.*" She feels that there is still no justice for the people who were affected by the war, especially those whose loved ones are still missing. She says "*even today, I don't know whether my father is alive or not.*"

She was also particularly appreciative of the various religious and cultural practices she was exposed to, during her travels to various parts of the country through the CMP program. "*I have seen Buddhist children give betel leaves and ask for our blessings by worshipping us. I've seen this type of cultural activity on television but for the first time I saw it myself and experienced it. As an Islamic lady this practice was initially awkward for me and I did not know what to do, because there are no similar practices in Islam. But in the end, I just hugged them as if they were my own children.*"

The CMP experience has given Sharika confidence to engage in conflict resolution. At the community level she has helped organize reconciliation activities after the Easter bombings and the backlash against the Muslim community. She also feels more confident to get involved in family disputes; "*I believe that if I explain the solution for the problem as I've learned in the program, it would be acceptable to society. People will agree with me.*" She feels that her approach has also changed. "*Earlier when a problem or quarrel got worse I would easily get angry and wouldn't be able to bear the situation anymore. Sometimes I have got so angry I have slapped the person who was causing the problem. But after participating in the program I try to maintain my tolerance as much as I can and I have the mentality of sacrifice for the betterment of others.*" However Sharika explains that despite being well respected in her community and family, it is still not easy to effective resolve conflicts.

*"In my family, a conflict got worse. Two males were about to beat two girls. At that situation I tried my level best to stop it. I tried my maximum to solve it peacefully. But they didn't give a chance to me and didn't even listen to me. So I called the police. I tried my level best to stop the violence and prevent those girls from the violence, but the men didn't listen to me. So, as my last option I called the police. I got this courage because of my previous experience in Public and Social Services. And also I am a member of Civil Protection society. So people do respect me."*

Sharika's story illustrates what can change at the level of individual attitudes and behavior, but it also illustrates the barriers faced by women in conservative societies when they attempt to put their learning into practice, and engage in reconciliation and conflict resolution activities.

## "I am grateful": The story of Sudath

Sudath is 22 years old, and is the current president of the Youth Organization in Moneragala. He lives in an area which is predominantly Sinhalese. He explains that in their youth organization, the post of president is always reserved for someone from the Sinhalese ethnicity. Youth from Tamil and Muslim communities may be elected to any other position and in fact, a Tamil youth currently holds the vice president position. He says earnestly that there should be no division; *"Even though the president is a Buddhist, we give everybody an equal power and position. I was nominated to the position of president by a Tamil youth and I proposed his name for vice president. Otherwise he would feel unfairly treated."*

Outgoing and well spoken, Sudath has participated in many programs to promote coexistence and engagement among youth, and makes friends easily. Because he lives in Moneragala which is overwhelmingly Sinhalese, he has had little opportunity to make friends with Tamils and Muslims before the CMP. *"Now I have a lot of Tamil and Muslim friends. At the workshop in Mannar, I made many friends and I still talk with them. The day we left, the Tamil youth cried and we also felt very emotional when we left them there. After just those 2 or 3 days we got really close with them. We sang songs together and made really great friends."* He goes on to say that he still keeps in touch with these friends he made at the workshop. They have made plans to meet up and go on a trip together and also to get together and do some charity work. *"There are schools which have very few facilities in Mannar, compared to the rest of the country. Some children wear the same school uniform every day, some write the notes for all the subjects in the same book. We thought of getting together and maybe helping by getting some school supplied for the children. I don't think the brotherhood that we built with these*

*workshops is one that will break. We are planning to start a Tamil language class here at the Youth Centre too."*

Sudath comes from a family of five. His elder brother, who was in the Army, passed way in 2009, just before the war ended. *"I was very young then, and I developed a very strong hatred towards Tamils. I carried that hatred in my heart for years, but I changed my ideas and came out of that hatred after participating in the CMP program. I am very grateful for that."* Hearing first hand, how others have suffered has played a large role in helping him to overcome his feelings and change his attitudes. He says *"we heard about the really bad things that people went through. One girl said someone was killed in front of her and another boy send his brother was forcibly dragged away to join the LTTE. He said his brother was shouting while he was being dragged away that he cannot go to the LTTE. They kept on beating him up and dragged him away. These are all young people. We felt very sad for them. From there we contemplated about why there is distance between us. Usually when we go to Jaffna or Mannar it is an excursion or holiday. But with these programs we actually got to learn something."* Sudath also noted that the structure of the workshop helped to make an impact. Countering the idea that visiting places where incidents happened and meeting people from other ethnicities in enough for people to change their minds, Sudath said the first day of facilitated dialogue was key. *"We need the first day seminar to change our mindset. We need to both listen and see, to understand. The first day seminar is therefore really important."* He feels that there is a huge change in his mindset from the time when his brother passed away, to now. He directly credits the facilitated dialogue workshops and meeting people from other ethnicities as the reasons why he changed his mindset. *"They are not bad people at all. They too want reconciliation."*

Sudath went on to offer some suggestions for CMP and other similar programs. He says *"these programs help to change ideas at the grassroots level, which is great. Ideally you should have an in-depth training for youth over one or two weeks, and then once we are well trained, distribute us to different communities to address the youth."* He notes however that conflict is often not among youth. Often the conflict is between adults, and as a youth he says it is find for them to intercede when adults are having a conflict. Pointing to the Sinhalese in Moneragala, Sudath says they have this idea that they are the superior race because they are the majority. *"They brainwash their children with this idea and separate them from other communities."* He feels that the youth cannot change these ideas held by adults and felt that programs such as CMP can play that role. *"So I ask you all to speak to the adults. If adults are to listen, adults will need to address them."*

61

# References

De Mel, N (2013) The Promise of the LLRC: Women's Testimony and Justice in Post-War Sri Lanka, ICES Research Paper 4, Colombo, February 2013

De Silva, N and Mohammed Sadaath (2018) *"A Compass for Navigating a Complex World: Methodology Reflection based on the Developmental Evaluation of the Community Memorialization Project"*, Practice Note No 02, May 2018, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Dozois, E, Marc Langlois and Natasha Blanchet-Cohen (2010) *A Practitioner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation*, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development, Canada

Hettiarachchi, R (2019) *Going Beyond the Archive: Facilitated Dialogue using Public History Collections. An introduction to the Series of Facilitate Dialogue Workshops,* Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R (2019). *A Roadmap for the Youth Component of the Community Memorialization Project Phase II*, January 2019, Internal Note.

Hettiarachchi, R (2018) "*Narrative history documentation: a tool-kit based on the methodologies used in the HerStories project and the community memorialization project*", March 2018, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R (2017) "*What should we, how should we, when should we, why should we remember*?" Discussion paper, No 02, June 2017, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R (2017) "*Walking in another's shoes a facilitation guide for exchange, empathy and dialogue at district level"* Dialogue Guide, December 2017, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R (2016) "*Challenges and Opportunities for Memorialization in Sri Lanka: Grassroots reflections*", Discussion paper No 01, August 2016, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R (2016) "*Memorialization and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka*", Practice Note No 01, August 2016, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R (2016) *"Going beyond the archive: facilitated dialogue using public history collections: An introduction to the series of facilitated dialogue workshops*", August 2016, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R, Nilakshi De Silva and Marisa Fernando (2017) "*Building a value - based society: contributing to non-recurrence of violence in future: a facilitation guide for community dialogue at village level*", Dialogue Guide, April 2017, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Hettiarachchi, R, Nilakshi De Silva and Marisa Fernando (2017) "*Understanding and rising above conflict: a facilitation guide for dialogues at inter-divisional level*", December 2017, Search for Common Ground, Colombo

Kartikowati, R S (2013) 'The Technique of "Plan Do Check and Act" to Improve Trainee Teachers' Skills' in **Asian Social Science**; Vol. 9, No. 12; 2013 Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

Karunadasa, M "Post War Resettlement in Sri Lanka, CEPA blog, April 22, 2016 http://www.cepa.lk/blog/details/post-war-resettlement-in-sri-lanka-02f9bd78786e722b6f832d9ee4bd83ad.html

Pannalige U. (Ed.). (2017). An introduction to *Post-war peace building and development in Sri Lanka* (01st ed), University of Ruhuna, Matara.

Keenan, A. (2019) Sri Lanka's Easter Bombings: Peaceful Coexistence Under Attack, International Crisis Group, Sri Lanka Commentary Published 23 April 2019
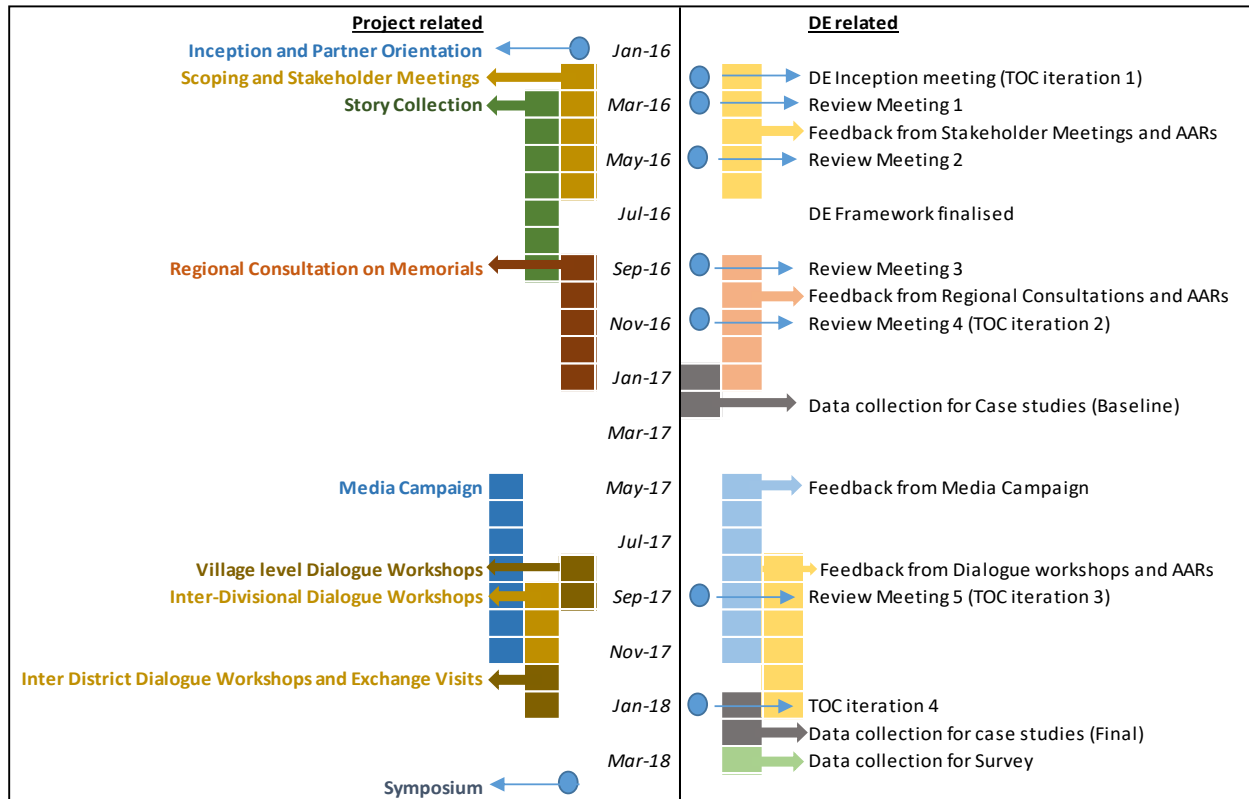
Patton, M. Q. (1994) "*Developmental Evaluation*" in Evaluation Practice, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1994, pp. 311-319.

Salter, M "Sri Lanka: In Search Of Truth & Reconciliation" in Colombo Telegraph, February 23, 2019 https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/sri-lanka-in-search-of-truth-reconciliation/

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Timeline of Project and DE Activities

Phase 1: January 2016 -  March 2018



| Project related | | DE related |
|---|---|---|
| Inception and Partner Orientation | Jan-16 | |
| Scoping and Stakeholder Meetings | | DE Inception meeting (TOC iteration 1) |
| | | Review Meeting 1 |
| Story Collection | Mar-16 | Feedback from Stakeholder Meetings and AARs |
| | May-16 | Review Meeting 2 |
| | Jul-16 | DE Framework finalised |
| Regional Consultation on Memorials | Sep-16 | Review Meeting 3 |
| | | Feedback from Regional Consultations and AARs |
| | Nov-16 | Review Meeting 4 (TOC iteration 2) |
| | Jan-17 | |
| | | Data collection for Case studies (Baseline) |
| | Mar-17 | |
| Media Campaign | May-17 | Feedback from Media Campaign |
| | Jul-17 | |
| Village level Dialogue Workshops | | Feedback from Dialogue workshops and AARs |
| Inter-Divisional Dialogue Workshops | Sep-17 | Review Meeting 5 (TOC iteration 3) |
| | Nov-17 | |
| Inter District Dialogue Workshops and Exchange Visits | | |
| | Jan-18 | TOC iteration 4 |
| | | Data collection for case studies (Final) |
| | Mar-18 | Data collection for Survey |
| Symposium | | |

# Phase II: July 2018 – April 2020

**Project related**

**DE related**

Internal meeting with partners

Jul-18

DE Inception meeting (TOC iteration )

Partners orientation

Sep-18

Feedback on module and preparing feedback tool

ToT on Village level Dialogue

Oct-18

**Village level dialogue**

Nov-18

Review Meeting 1

Feedback from village level dialogue and AARs

stakeholders consultation on youth process

Dec-18

Jan-19

Review Meeting 2

Feb-19

Baseline study -youth

**ToT and Inter-divisonal dialogue**

Monitoring of inter -dvisonal dialogue

Baseline, case study

Mar-19

Testing of youth baseline

Tor development for media consultant
and seed grant application and small
grant concept development

Apr-19

Inputs for media strategy development and
small grant concept development

Facilitator training for inter-generational youth dialogue

May-19

Context assessment after April 21st incident

haring workshop at district and national level

Review meeting 3

Jun-19

Jul-19

Tools development , feed back ,AAR and Monitoring of intergenerational dialogue

Inter generational youth dialogue

ToT for inter -District Dialogue

Aug-19

Monitoring tools development for inter-Disrtict dialogue and module revison

Sep-19

Oct-19

Monitoring and data collection on seed grant

Nov-19

Feedback from Media Campaign

Monitoring and data collection of inter district dialogues

Media campaign

Dec-19

Inter district dialogue -Adults

d grant proposal receving and implementation

Jan-20

Partner reflection meeting ,case study interveiws and reporting

Feb-20

Mar-20

Apr-20

65

# Annex 2: Survey Participant Profiles

**Table 1: Phase I Survey - Participants Profile**

| | | Participant group # | Non-participant group # | Sub total # | % of sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **District** | Ampara | 50 | 50 | 100 | 33% |
| | Matara | 50 | 50 | 100 | 33% |
| | Mannar | 50 | 50 | 100 | 33% |
| **Gender** | Male | 40 | 35 | 75 | 25% |
| | Female | 110 | 115 | 225 | 75% |
| **Ethnicity** | Sinhalese | 46 | 46 | 92 | 31% |
| | Sri Lanka Moor | 28 | 28 | 56 | 19% |
| | Sri Lanka Tamil | 74 | 73 | 147 | 49% |
| | Up Country Tamil | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2% |
| **Religion** | Buddhism | 46 | 47 | 93 | 31% |
| | Islam | 29 | 27 | 56 | 19% |
| | Hindu | 41 | 41 | 82 | 27% |
| | Christian | 34 | 35 | 69 | 23% |
| **Education** | Never been to school | 4 | 11 | 15 | 5% |
| | Up to grade 5 | 16 | 20 | 36 | 12% |
| | Passed between grade 6 – 10 | 19 | 28 | 47 | 16% |
| | Passed O/Ls | 48 | 38 | 86 | 29% |
| | Passed A/Ls | 52 | 43 | 95 | 32% |
| | Graduate | 11 | 10 | 21 | 7% |

**Table 2: Phase II Youth Baseline Survey - Participants Profile**

| | | Participants # |
|---|---|---|
| **District** | Ampara | 100 |
| | Matara | 49 |
| | Mannar[16] | 0 |
| | Anuradhapura | 49 |
| | Kaluthura | 57 |
| | Monaragala | 32 |
| **Gender** | Male | 131 |
| | Female | 139 |
| | Not mentioned | 17 |
| **Ethnicity** | Sinhalese | 123 |
| | Sri Lanka Moor | 90 |
| | Sri Lanka Tamil | 55 |
| | Not mentioned | 19 |
| **Religion** | Buddhism | 122 |
| | Islam | 93 |
| | Hindu | 52 |
| | Christian | 06 |
| | Others | 04 |
| **Education** | Never been to school | 2 |
| | Up to grade 5 | 03 |
| | Passed between grade 6 – 10 | 50 |
| | Passed O/Ls | 83 |
| | Passed A/Ls | 96 |
| | Degree and above | 20 |
| | Special education | 10 |
| | Not mentioned | 23 |

---

[16] Baseline was not conduced due to time constraints and miscommunication between project team and Partner Organization.

**Table 3: Key Informant Interview**

| Name | Designation | Criteria for Selection |
|------|-------------|------------------------|
| Thilaimma | Field coordinator | Implementing Partner, Ampara |
| Nagesh | Field coordinator | Implementing Partner, Ampara |
| Namal | Filed coordinator | Implementing Partner, Matara |
| Dalima | Field coordinator | Implementing Partner, Mannar |
| Amila and Imran | Managing Directors -IDEAS | Workshop Facilitator |
| Sornalingam | Senior Program Officer-Sri Lanka center for Development Facilitation | Workshop Facilitator |
| Manjula and Manjula | Prayama Creations (PVT ) Ltd | Electronic Media Campaign |
| Vidhanapathirana | National Integration Promotion Officer | Government Official, local government |
| Vinodhini | Translator | Youth Workshop Translator |

# Annex 3: Workshop Participant Profile

**Table 1: Total Number of Participants by District and Ethnicity, at Village Level Workshops**
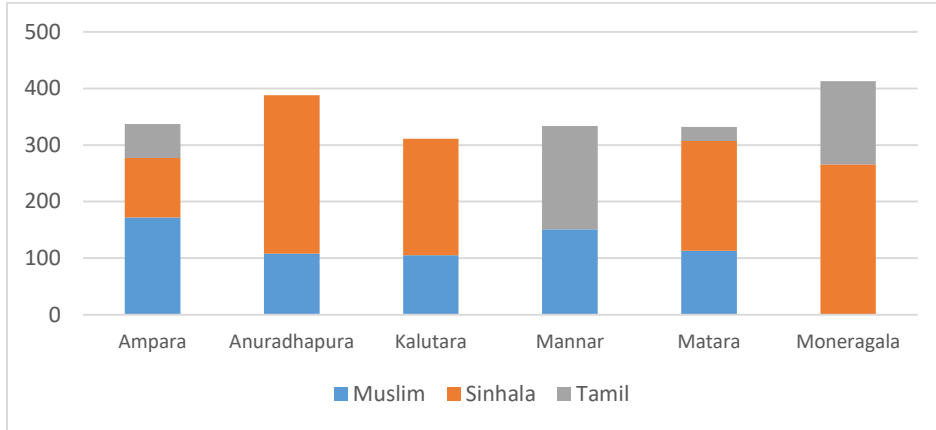


**Table 2: Number of Participants at Divisional Level Workshops, by Ethnicity**
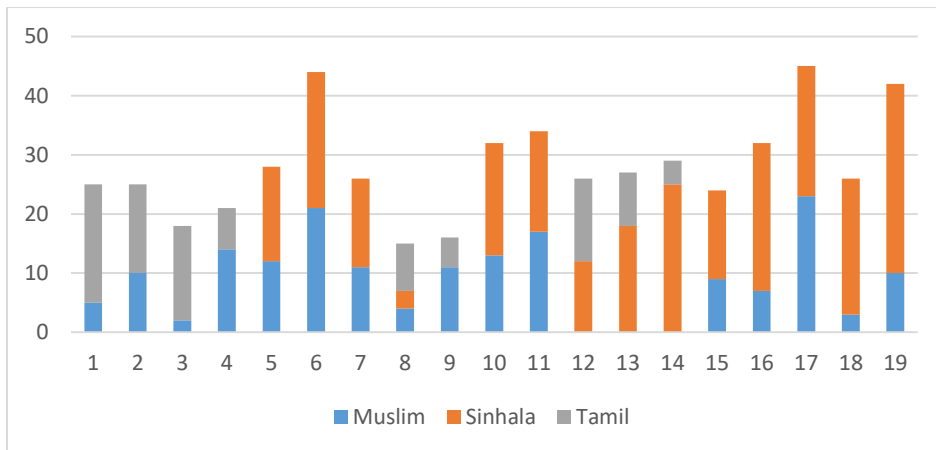


**Table 3: Number of Participants at District Level Workshops, by Ethnicity**
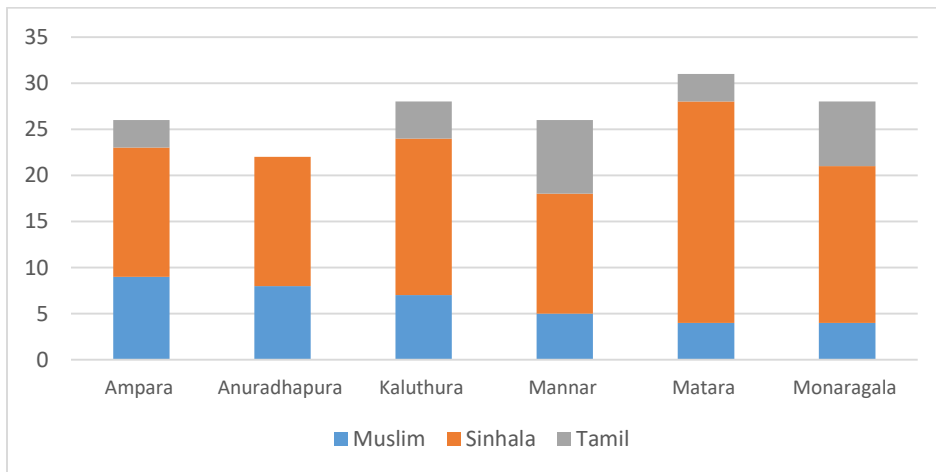
# Participation by Gender

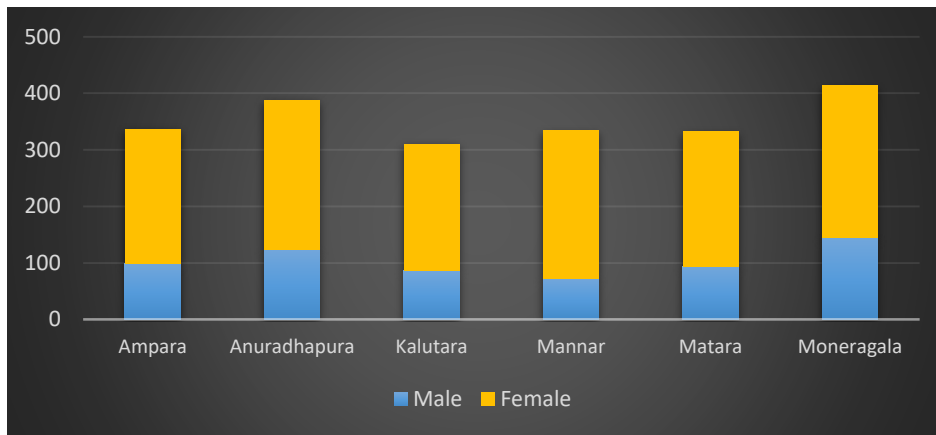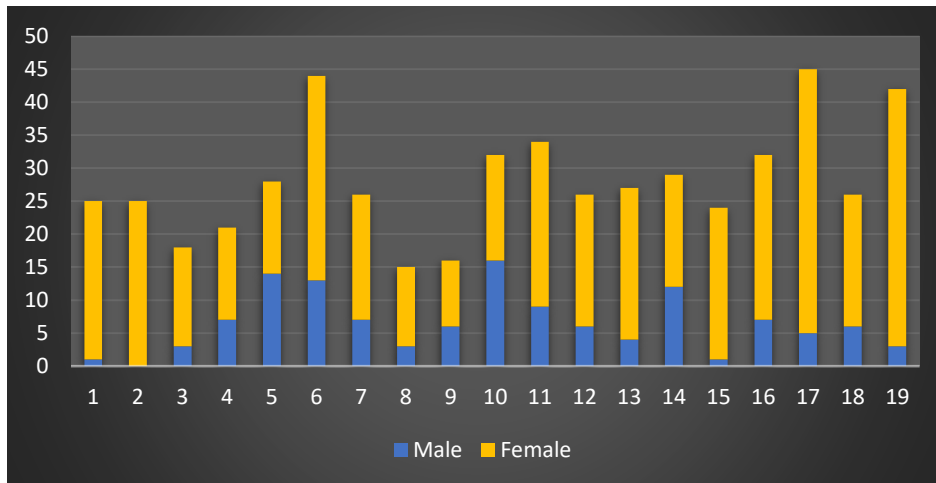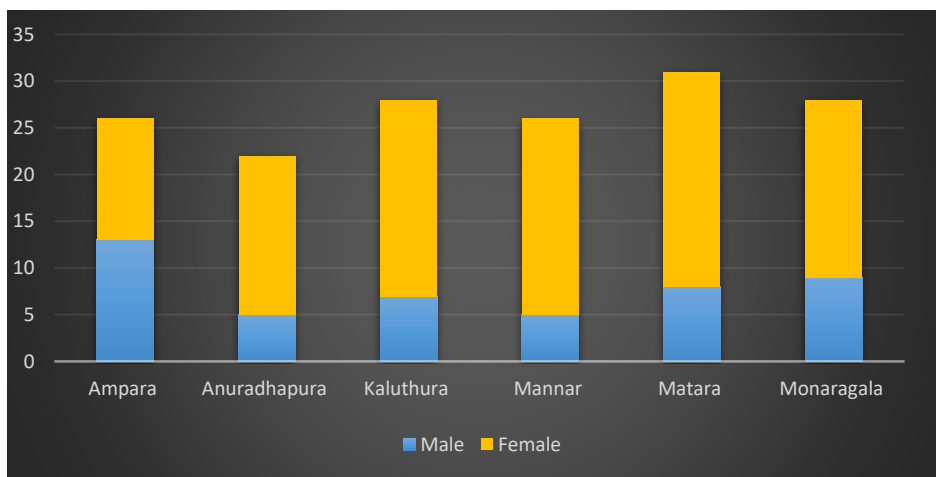**Table 1: Total Number of Participants by District and Gender, at Village Level Workshops**



**Table 2: Number of Participants at Divisional Level Workshops, by Gender**



**Table 3: Number of Participants at District Level Workshops, by Gender**

# Annex 4: Youth Participant Profile

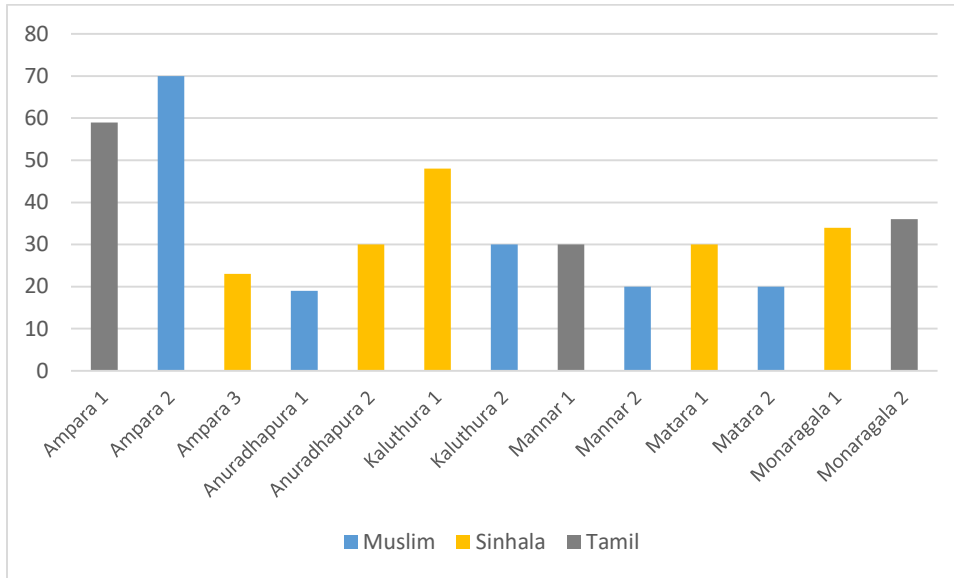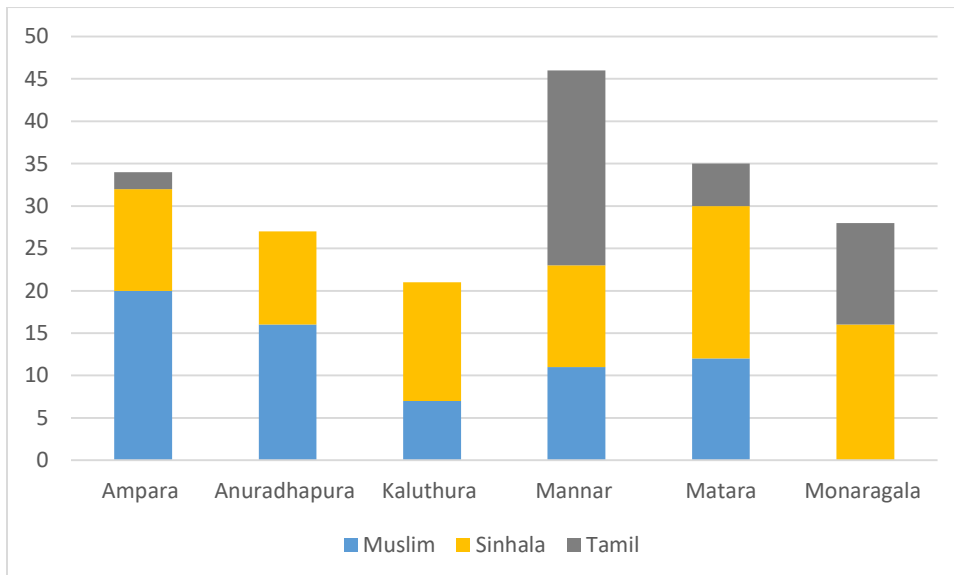Table 1: Number of Participants at Divisional Level Workshops, by Ethnicity



Table 2: Number of Participants at District Level Workshops, by Ethnicity

# Participation by Gender

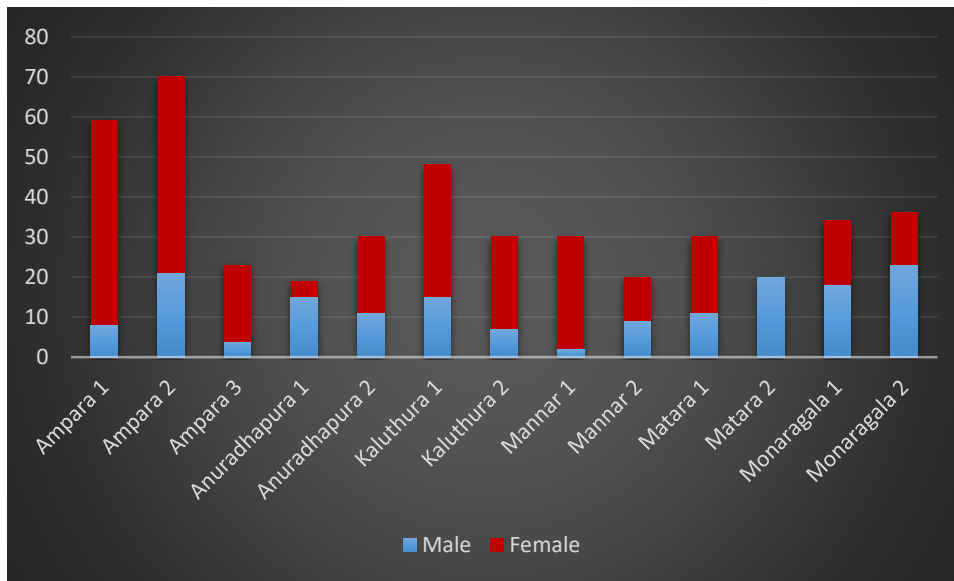Table 1: Number of Participants at Divisional Level Workshops, by Gender



Table 2: Number of Participants at District Level Workshops, by Gender