



# Final Evaluation

**Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for  
Long-Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka**

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# I Executive Summary

“Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for Long-Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka” (the project) was implemented by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC), and was funded by the United Nations Peace Building Fund (UNPBF). The project was implemented over an 18-month period from inception in early 2018, until October 2019. The project funding was part of the UNPBF’s Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI). The project aimed to engage young men and women equally with the transitional justice process, and transform them into ‘insider mediators’ who have influence to promote peace in Sri Lanka. There were three main interventions: 1). Law students were trained and mentored to be able to work with the transitional justice mechanisms, as an effective and non-violent way to address past abuses; 2). University students were empowered, and capacities built, to become engaged in positive dialogue, including with policy makers on transitional justice and reconciliation activities; 3). Young grassroots activists were supported to understand and address key youth concerns and transmit them to policy makers. The project began during a time period where the government of Sri Lanka was supportive towards peace institutions and processes. It is important to note that three important events happened during the course of the project which shaped the context of both the project and the evaluation, as well as the general context of peacebuilding in the country: the ‘constitutional crisis’ of October 2018 which resulted in two concurrent Prime Ministers; the Easter Sunday bombings of April 2019 which drastically changed the conflict landscape; and 2019 presidential election at the time the project ended and the evaluation started, which resulted in a change of government perceived as potentially not supportive of the peacebuilding process.

MDF conducted the final evaluation of the project from November 2019 until January 2020. The objectives of the evaluation (as per the evaluation TOR), are: to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project, as well as to identify success stories and lessons learned. During the inception phase, it was decided that learning would be a key purpose for the evaluation, and a sense-making workshop would be held with the project team to support in analysing the initial findings. It is anticipated that users of the evaluation will include the project team or NPC itself, as it continues with peacebuilding work or another phase of the same project; other organisations in Sri Lanka working on peacebuilding including civil society and government and non-government entities; either to consider the lessons learned, or to utilise the success stories and lessons for showcasing successful models and securing ongoing support and funding. Due to the request for descriptive findings, and problematic access to the full range of evaluation research participants which would have allowed more systematic and statistically valid quantitative analysis, it was decided that qualitative methodology was particularly suitable for the evaluation approach.

Data collection involved focus group discussions and interviews with more than 150 participants and stakeholders. Data was compiled, analysis was conducted by considering quantity and quality of evidence against the evaluation questions, and final judgement by consensus of the evaluation team, using a judgement scorecard, explained in the background section as well as the inception report. The findings and conclusions in this report are presented in narrative format, due to their qualitative nature.

The relevance of the project was assessed as very positive; the project design and implementation was appropriate for the context and working with young people in the universities and districts; it was complementary to other peacebuilding and social cohesion work being done in Sri Lanka; and the participants themselves recognised its importance. The project was implemented at an opportune time, when the enabling environment was encouraging, and peacebuilding was a country priority for the nation. The evaluators found that the objectives of the project are still relevant for Sri Lanka.

The project was assessed positively in terms of efficiency, considering use of cost and time, as well as sharing of resources such as talent and networking. Expenses were appropriate, and any decisions to incur higher-cost facilities helped to enable achievement of results. The project team made good use of collaboration with other entities, and sharing of resources. Although there was pressure to complete all of the activities within a limited time period, the team managed well. Because of the limited scope of the project, the monitoring system was not designed to systematically capture higher level changes. Designing the M&E system to more systematically capture outcome-level changes is something we recommend for any subsequent phases, to help the team learn more about how young people engage in transitional justice in various ways.

The project was effective in imparting knowledge, improving attitudes and willingness, and encouraging actualization of the concept of transitional justice among young people in the universities and districts. More than technical knowledge about transitional justice, many participants experienced a transformation in their mindset. However, the intervention was not fully implemented at two sites, due to negative reaction of the participant audience to the training, and problems with coordination within one of the universities. Some of the reasons for success, or non-success, include participant selection, the capability of the coordinators, the training methodology, and the facilities provided.

As a result of the project, there were several progressions towards impact. One observation was that immediately after the trainings, participants shared the concept of transitional justice with peers and family. There are many reported cases of participants and other stakeholders pursuing transitional justice as an academic study, or interacting with the concept in the university environment. Participants expressed their desire to respond to real-world issues such as the Easter attacks, and some district youth leaders in particular are supporting marginalized persons in their communities to access transitional justice mechanisms. Some participants have taken up the opportunity to engage in transitional justice mechanisms professionally, or voluntarily, as a trainer. The leadership skills gained and networks built by the participants are useful for their career, as well as personal prospects. Some participants think the NPC project, along with other social cohesion interventions, have contributed to dissuading youth from becoming involved in politically-charged violence or antisocial behaviours. However, since the NPC training and follow-up initiative so far was a one-time event, the participants may not sustain their engagement in transitional justice dialogue, or lead their own initiatives in the universities again, without direct support to do so.

Directly after the intervention, participants shared their experience of the engagement with their immediate friends and family; however, cautioning responses have made them less likely to sustain dialogue about transitional justice, or express political opinion on the topic to others. The learning environment for transitional justice in the universities may be improving. However, wider societal and political change was not expected within the scope of this project.

The enabling environment for youth engagement in transitional justice may be ambiguous at the time of this report; however, the need for the project remains. There may be an opportunity for NPC to utilise already established relationships, goodwill, and resources, to continue and leverage the results that the project has brought so far.

# 1 Background

## Project Funding, Partners, and Supporters

MDF South Asia (MDF) was commissioned by NPC to conduct the final evaluation of the project: Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for Long-Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka. The project was conducted by NPC. Funding for the project was secured through the UNPBF and is part of the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI). Through GYPI, the PBF supports the empowerment of women and the advancement of gender equality, and recognises the importance of young people in peacebuilding. An important criteria for NPC to select participants for activities was therefore an equal weighting for young women and men, where possible, for active participation. GYPI projects are relatively short (18 months) and encourage innovative methodologies. The total budget for the project was \$454,148.50.

NPC is an independent and impartial national non-governmental organisation in Sri Lanka. One focus of the NPC is peace education, and it supports advocacy, research, training, mobilization and dialogue to build a rights-conscious society. Since NPC has been established in Sri Lanka for approximately 25 years, and has extensive experience in peacebuilding, including through the civil conflict years, the organisation was able to develop the project proposal and design the project implementation without extensive support from UNPBF for consultation.

One implementing partner for the project was Legal Action Worldwide (LAW). LAW uses creative legal strategies to improve access to justice and provide redress, especially in conflict-affected states. LAW in Sri Lanka supported the project in the development of the M&E framework, and was the main implementing partner for Outcome 1. As part of the Outcome 1, Harvard International Human Rights Clinic was instrumental the development of the plan for the establishment and promotion of the Human Rights Clinic and the development of a transitional justice curriculum at the University of Jaffna.

The Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms in Sri Lanka (SCRM), was an important Strategic Partner for the project. SCRM was instrumental as the main governmental support body for the project, and provided linkages through formal channels to the University Grants Commission and directly to Vice Chancellors of participating universities.

12 national universities in Sri Lanka supported project activities on their campuses and student participation, for Outcome 2. These included: University of Colombo, Eastern University, Jaffna University, Wayamba University, University of Peradeniya, Sabaragamuwa University, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, University of Runhuna, University of Kelaniya, University of Rajarata, Uva Wellasa University, and South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Each university appointed a coordinator who worked closely with the project team.

For Outcome 3, project activities were conducted for district youth from 21 districts. The project activities were organised in 10 geographical clusters. The coordination was supported through district partners, and included various civil society organisations.

The project activities were also supported by national and international trainers on transitional justice.

The project document outlines the project description, context, rationale, desired results, information about the target stakeholders, and plans for the project implementation and management. The results framework includes outcomes and outputs, indicators, data sources and target milestones. The baseline study, pre and post-training tests, and survey were valuable documents to inform this evaluation. Project progress reports provided information at various times of the project. In addition, the report from the final reflection event and champions' event, and the survey on youth attitude towards transitional justice conducted by the district youth, were valuable inputs for the evaluation.

### **Context of the Project and the Final Evaluation**

The project has been implemented in a challenging and dynamic context. Transitional Justice is a relatively new concept in Sri Lanka, and has faced resistance in political, education, and community spheres. Only after 2015, there was space given for transitional justice initiatives, and other efforts in peacebuilding and social cohesion started.

NPC has existed in Sri Lanka for a relatively long time, with the mandate and mission to work towards peacebuilding. However, other NGOs and entities were not able to engage in this work prior to 2015. NPC has good international links and resources. Since 2015, there has been increased international pressure to make peacebuilding and reconciliation sustainable. Since the topic of transitional justice was not previously well developed in Sri Lanka, NPC and the trainers used case studies from other countries, and even international trainers, in the trainings and project activities.

Constructive civic engagement has been a challenge in Sri Lanka for several decades. There was a large response effort to the Asian Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 by NGOs, charities, and INGOs. However, the overall effort was largely uncoordinated, and in certain instances led to greater inequality. Many organisations that assisted in humanitarian relief stayed for several years after to try to uplift recovery and livelihood initiatives, with mixed results in terms of sustainability.

The conditions in which NPC works are greatly shaped by the 30-years long civil war. An atmosphere of injustice remains. Before 2015, there was no enabling environment for journalists and those working towards human rights or transitional justice. Political factions and powerful actors at national and local levels benefit from perpetuating fear and constant teetering towards social violence. This has become apparent in recent years, with communal violence erupting and media blockages in the Central Province in 2018, as well as to the aftermath of the April attacks to churches and hotels in 2019. This event

had a large effect on livelihoods and impeded efforts towards peacebuilding throughout the country. However, several promising initiatives, including the Office of Missing Persons, and the Right to Information Act, have been institutionalised in recent years. Looking towards the end of 2019 and from 2020 onwards, the future for peacebuilding, and strong foundations for economic and ecological justice are uncertain. The context in which development and civil society actors operate has been volatile and will continue to be so in the months to come, with upcoming elections. Since this evaluation was completed, Sri Lanka has withdrawn from its co-sponsorship of the UN Human Rights resolution 30/1. The strategic focus of the country, and thereby development and humanitarian efforts, remains uncertain.

Transitional Justice mechanisms in Sri Lanka during design and implementation phases of the project included: government commitments to the establishment of the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms, the Public Representation Committee on Constitutional Reforms, commissions to investigate corruption, recent establishment of the Office of Missing Persons, and most significantly the passage of the Right to Information act in 2016. Sri Lanka was also a co-sponsor of UN Human Rights Council resolution 30/1, promoting reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in Sri Lanka. Efforts to support transitional justice include not only the above mechanisms, but also ways to recognize victims and possibilities to promote peace, reconciliation and democracy. This could include promotion of realistic access to justice, increasing respect for the rule of law, including women and marginalized groups play an effective role in the pursuit of a just society, and restoring confidence in institutions. The equal engagement of young men and women with these processes can be enhanced through fostering awareness, training, and mentoring especially through higher education systems. From before the start of the project, the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, and Jaffna were serving as hubs for young people to train and build professional experience in these areas.

In Sri Lanka, the concept of transitional justice has faced negative perceptions and resistance. Conflict-affected people may have been raising their voice; however, there were no formal mechanisms in place to address issues at the end of the war, and therefore the issues may have been suppressed or neglected. Some lawyers, politicians, and rights-based organisations campaigned for transitional justice mechanisms. Ethnic divides in the community have differentiated the acceptance of transitional justice. For example, NPC may have found it difficult to implement initiatives towards transitional justice with Sinhala communities, who may not have found transitional justice relevant for them. Because the concepts are unfamiliar and relatively new in Sri Lanka, politicians and leaders at different levels may have been able to manipulate perceptions of transitional justice for their own purposes and to perpetuate power dynamics. Therefore, misrepresentation of transitional justice is an ongoing challenge for NPC and other peacebuilding actors.

University students, and youth in general, are easily wooed by various political factions, or student movements. There was not enough scope in the project to capture the attention of the whole youth body in the country. An additional challenge for a national-level project like this one is that there are large differences between youth from different

regions and universities in awareness, attitudes, and practices towards transitional justice. However, large potential exists for continuing transitional justice work with youth. Younger generations, who over time will have been less directly affected by the war, and are upcoming business and civil society leaders, will in the future hold the mantle of peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Since the presidential elections in 2015, there was space for progression towards transitional justice. However, the government did not actively work to communicate about the concept. This space was not managed well. In the absence of a proper government information campaign, misinformation was spread. The concept of transitional justice had a lot of support from the international community. However, the meaningful implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in the country fell short of expectations. NPC is not working in a vacuum of information about transitional justice as such, but in a hotbed of misinformation, falsehoods, and negative propaganda. While space for transitional justice technically exists, but is not an easy space.

Among the general population, the effects of the civil war on mindsets towards 'others' were not dealt with. There is latent racism that was allowed to be articulated after the 2018 ethnic riots in Kandy, as well as the Easter Sunday bombings in April 2019. Leaders (formal and informal, as well as religious) were able to continue with the dialogue on 'whom the country belongs to'.

Amongst both sides of the divide exacerbated by the 30-years civil war, transitional justice is often falsely interpreted as 'punishing the war heroes' or 'punishing the soldiers', This interpretation may feel demoralizing for some factions, and is unproductive. Whether transitional justice is perceived positively or negatively, that was the general misconception among people who had heard about transitional justice mechanisms.

For a country to engage in a transitional justice process is a demonstration that the government and country considers the aspirations of 'others'. Opposition to transitional justice mechanisms in Sri Lanka shows that the majority, and politicians, may not deem it in their interest to allow recognition of misdemeanours by majority groups.

There was support from the government to NPC during the project implementation period. However, the intervention done by NPC is very small (50 students is a tiny proportion of the student population in the university). It is a 'drop in the ocean'. Therefore, one purpose of the project can be to 'prove it can be done' – that with rational engagement, there is a possibility to change, to instil a proper concept of what is transitional justice. Therefore, the project can be framed as a case study of how the model can work, if the government chooses to take it up. The success of the project may demonstrate, on micro level, what can happen on macro level.

Potential reaction from the recently elected government towards the NPC, the project, or the evaluation, is a concern. It was expected that the concept of transitional justice is highly sensitive during the evaluation phase. Furthermore, stakeholders, such as the youth target audience and university stakeholders, may have been apprehensive about

participating in meetings, discussions, initiatives, or research about transitional justice. Depending on the province and district, the evaluation used phrases like ‘peacebuilding’ instead of transitional justice.

## Project Methodology

The Youth Engagement with Transitional Justice for Long-Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka project aimed to engage young men and women equally with the transitional justice process. Law students were trained and mentored to be able to work with the transitional justice mechanisms, as an effective and non-violent way to address past abuses. University students were be empowered, and capacities built, to become engaged in positive dialogue, including with policy makers on transitional justice and reconciliation activities. Young grassroots activists were supported to understand and address key youth concerns and transmit them to policy makers. In particular, the University of Jaffna was a focal point from the beginning of the program. The desired result of the project is that young legal professionals are able to access the legal justice system and transitional justice mechanisms from the start of their careers; that a student population is mobilized to drive transitional justice and reconciliation; and that youth support for the transitional justice mechanisms in Sri Lanka is increased.

NPC facilitated training modules on transitional justice which were deliberately designed to be highly interactive, relate well to the participants, and to not be patronising or prescriptive. The sessions were designed as ‘edutainment’. The facilitators managed multi-language groups, with simultaneous translation. There was a common dialogue, with no lag in communication, and no dominant dialogue. This may have been one of the first times that the target audience has experienced a common dialogue with other ethnic groups. The training design for the North and the South was largely the same, but the discourse that surfaced was vastly different.

Initially in the trainings, there was some rejection of the concept of transitional justice. The expert facilitators first concentrated on empathy, rapport and connection building between the participants. The participants were given space, and encouraged, to voice their opinions and reactions to the concept. This included emotional expression, and being able to come with own meaning and ideas on the concept and how Sri Lanka should deal with this. The facilitators were then able to counter the ideas in a rational manner, and allow much of the process to play out before presenting the solution. The facilitators were able to frame the concept in a way which is closer to the realities of the youth participants by using metaphors, and avoiding academic or abstract words which could be easily misinterpreted.



The workshops seemed to have very tangible effects. Some participants were openly, vehemently opposed to the concept of transitional justice. By the end of the workshops,

some had completely changed their minds. Several participants, who were originally vehemently opposed to the concept of transitional justice in Sri Lanka, actually went on to become 'champions'. One of the university coordinators is now doing his PhD on reconciliation. These success stories may form an interesting basis for dialogue with project staff or the target group during the evaluation.

NPC designed the trainings and interventions so that young people would be encouraged and supported to act on their knowledge, by sharing and amplifying the knowledge with other young people. After gaining skills to be able to manage dialogues on the concept, the young people had time to dwell on the concept, think and internalise their intent. Some participants engaged in discussion about transitional justice with peers and family. University student participants were supported by their coordinators to organise an event, activity, or showcase the concept of transitional justice in the university space. District youth participants were encouraged to conduct awareness raising activities among their own youth organisations. These follow-up activities were not prescribed; the design and creativity of the activities was up to the youth participants.

## Project Implementation

At the start of the 2-year long project, the original results framework was developed with the project proposal. During the inception phase of the project, an M&E consultant was engaged to develop a revised results framework, which would be less cumbersome. The formulation of outcome statements especially was simplified, without substantial change in meaning. While progress reports have always officially been against the original version, the project team has in reality used primarily the revised version, both in implementing the project and in monitoring and reporting. The revised version of the results framework has been submitted with justification with the bi-annual or annual reports. Therefore, the final evaluation will also use the revised version of the results framework.

The project implemented three interventions:

1. In conjunction with the Harvard International Human Rights Clinic, and Legal Action Worldwide (LAW), the law curriculum at Jaffna University was revised, and the Human Rights Clinic was established. This intervention was begun earlier in the project, in 2018. Exposure visits to Harvard Law Faculty were facilitated.
2. The project conducted awareness raising workshops at 12 national universities, and then facilitated a select team of students at each to realize an awareness-building activity in 9 campuses. The project was able to access the universities through the University Grants Committee, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Vice Chancellors. Going through the formal channels was important, in order to ensure the interventions were supported from the top. Students from any faculty were able to join the activities. Approximately 50 students participated at each campus. The Project targeted 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, because they were more likely to stay in the university for another year. There was an advertising campaign about the event. The coordinators at each university managed an application system, with selection criteria, and scoring system (e.g.

war victims, studying peace, youth leaders, engaged in peace and reconciliation activities, gender, ethnic balance). Motivation to apply included learning about a new topic, and being able to gain a certificate. The coordinators managed an application system. This was an important mechanism – students were interested, not just nominated or requested to join. This was also to keep the ownership within the university. In hindsight, one disadvantage was that the project team was dependent on the coordinator.

The project team was able to engage with a coordinator from each university was able to organize the activity and get the students involved. This workshop was 2 and a half days at each location.

During the workshop, the facilitators openly engaged with the students to discuss the concept of transitional justice. Participants were given the opportunity to organize their own advocacy and awareness-raising activity towards other students.

Teams from 9 universities submitted project proposals, and were granted LKR 100,000 to organize the respective events. For example, they organized an art week at Jaffna University, a short film showing in Sabaragamuwa University, and a street drama at Eastern University.

The purpose of this exercise was to ensure that the learning of the workshop participants was amplified, and that the intervention did not just resemble an awareness-raising exercise quickly to be forgotten. The project was designed to guide the students through awareness-raising, internalization of the concept, and actualization.

Later, the coordinators organized a follow-up meeting to study how youth think of transitional justice. 9 coordinators were able to support this level of the intervention.

3. Similarly, to the university student intervention, the project team conducted awareness-raising trainings with influential youth leaders in the districts. The young leaders included young parliamentarians, social media influencers, youth representatives from district inter-religious society, and so on. They attended a 2-days workshop. 10 workshops were conducted for 21 districts. The workshops were two-and-a-half days long each, and were residential. After the workshops, the participants were encouraged conduct a half-day awareness raising session to their own group. The purpose of working with these young leaders was to amplify the message through an influencer and who has the mandate to present on this issue. Since the project had a fairly small budget, it was designed to work with leaders of already existing groups, and have a more sustainable ripple effect.

Three additional interventions were organised in 2019:

- A. At the end of October 2019, NPC was also able to organize a reflection event among the more heavily-involved participants.
- B. There was a 'championship' event to showcase the results in the network, with participation of over 200 youth leaders from all universities and districts, which showcased their achievements throughout the project.
- C. A study of how to young people perceive transitional justice, especially after 21/04, was conducted in April 2019.

The project officially ended on October 30. The final report is currently being finalised.

## 1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

Objectives of the evaluation as per the Evaluation TOR:

To assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project, as well as to identify success stories and lessons learned.

As per discussion during the inception meeting, a main priority for the evaluation was also for **learning**.

There are several types of stakeholders for whom the evaluation may be useful; NPC, civil society, and other peacebuilding actors including donors and project groups.

For stakeholders who are implementing other peacebuilding interventions, the lessons learned about successful engagement with youth participants will be useful. The project was unique in its methodology for engaging with young people. It was also one of the first times that such an intervention has managed to gain access inside national universities. Because of this unique approach, there several learning points regarding youth participant selection and engagement, as well as managing operations inside universities, which other entities who wish to implement similar approaches can learn from.

NPC is working towards the next phase of the project being funded. Establishing a sustainable mechanism for continuation of the successes is therefore important for NPC, as well as the donor and partners. A follow-up phase of the project is likely to be longer and perhaps under a different funding mechanism, in contrast to the GIYP mechanism which was for shorter and more innovative approaches; NPC is likely to go ahead with new funding by demonstrating that the approach is successful. That NPC is intending to continue the project through new funding mechanisms is an indication that the first, 18-month project funded by UNPBF, was valuable and worthwhile of follow-up.

For civil society and those interested in mainstreaming peacebuilding in institutions in Sri Lanka, the project could be an interesting model to showcase to government and authorities that peacebuilding initiatives with young people are valuable; they do not necessarily need to be prescriptive or use a top-down instructive model. Showcasing how the project functioned, particularly the content and the methodology of the trainings, may be important to convince authorities that such projects are not necessarily pushing a particular political agenda, and are not necessarily dangerous.

For the youth participants of the project who have indeed become mediators and are continuing to engage the topic of transitional justice, a strong track record from the project may demonstrate legitimacy in the method if they are working (professionally or voluntarily) to conduct trainings on transitional justice.

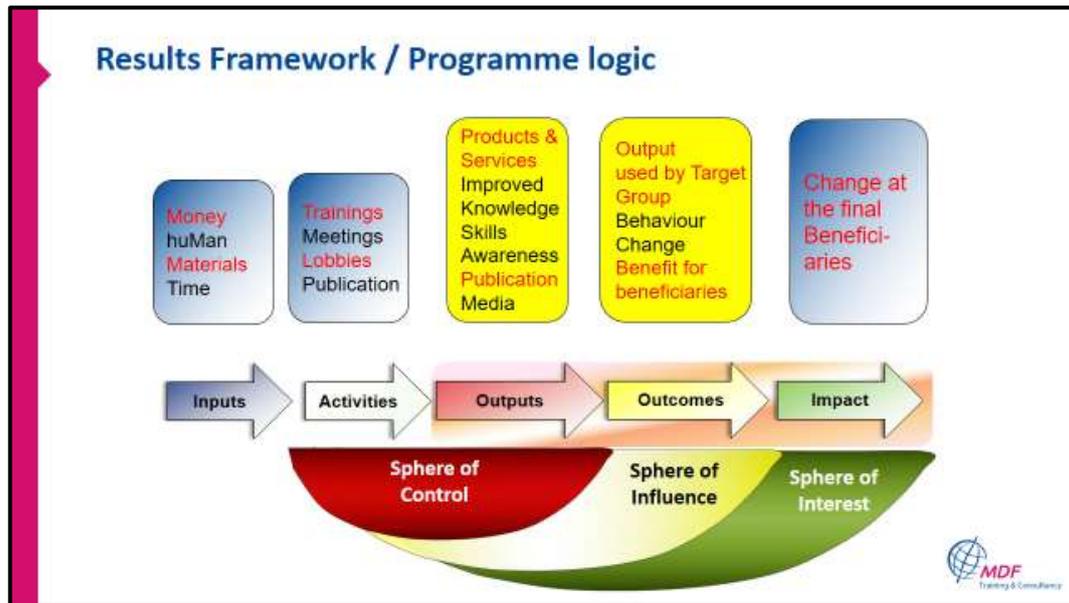
## 2 Methodology and Approach to the Evaluation

### Results-Chain Analysis

MDF used the results chain to interpret the evaluation questions, and develop lines of questioning which are woven into the data collection tools.

<b>RELEVANCE</b>	<b>Was there a need?</b> Did the needs of the beneficiaries' change? Is the methodology adapted to local context? Was the strategy aligned to national/provincial development plans? Was the Theory of Change coherent?
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	<b>Were resources used wisely?</b> What was the investment and input? Have resources been allocated appropriately to achieve results?
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>Was our intervention a catalyst for the desired change?</b> If the targets have been achieved, what is the reason? Did the target groups change their behaviour or take action?
<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>Did it have broad impact on social cultural, and political, transitional justice, situation in the region?</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>What remains after leaving?</b> Did the project build long-lasting capacities? Have institutional linkages been fostered?

Note that according to the results chain logic, outcome-level results are not under the control level of the project. Outcome-level results are medium to long-term, and are generally difficult to observe, or beginning to emerge, within an 18-month timeframe. Impact-level results are long-term, and may be observed several years after the project, and are results which the project contributes to in conjunction with other interventions, forces, and actors.



The project was evaluated against questions of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. From this, lessons learnt and recommendations were drawn. The evaluation consulted project documents, and employed qualitative data collection and analysis methods, including semi-structured focus group discussions with participants, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. From the 12 universities which were originally planned to be part of the intervention, MDF selected 4 as part of this stratified purposeful sample. From the 21 districts, for which 10 training sessions were held, 4 districts were selected as a stratified purposeful sample. This purposeful method was used in order to ensure efficiency in data collection, for which limited days were possible. MDF and NPC agreed, in order to not expend valuable data collection days for travel, that several selected geographical areas would be visited for data collection. To ensure the evaluation process was participatory and focused on learning, MDF conducted a sense-making workshop with NPC, on the initial findings. Outcome one was implemented by another agency, LAW. For the evaluation of Outcome One, there was less accessibility to conduct interviews and gather first-hand data.

According to the TOR, as well as an interview conducted with the UNPBF, descriptive findings and inclusion of quotations from evaluation research participants would also be important. Due to the political context during the inception and evaluation, interviewing all stakeholders particularly for Outcome 1 would have been difficult. The project was implemented nationally, and activities were conducted with participants in various areas of the country; it would not have been feasible to gather data from a representative sample of every geographical area, neither was it feasible to administer a survey to all or a representative sample of project participants. Rather, MDF in discussion with NPC chose several subgroups according to geographical area, where university student participants from Outcome 2 and district youth participants from Outcome 3 could both be accessed in the same area efficiently. From each district youth participant and university student participant subgroup, a subsample of participants was drawn for participation in the FGDs.

In the inception phase, both MDF and NPC recognised that the profile and results in each geographical area are very different. Therefore it is difficult to take data from four geographical areas as a true representation of the total participant group; we were wary of creating statistical generalisations from the data from only four geographical areas. Due to these reasons, a principally qualitative methodology was adopted, as it would have been problematic to employ a quantitative method.

During the project, most indicators in the results framework were measured at an output level. This was designed in order to use SMART, easily measurable targets, and to clearly analyse attribution by keeping a high degree of control over results. Therefore, the project team already has a good set of data representing the activity and output levels. The final evaluation aimed to gather more data in order to evaluate outcome level results, including behaviour and intended behaviours by the target participants and other boundary partners. Qualitative methods such as focus group discussions, were an important approach in this.

MDF places emphasis on strong qualitative data and data gathering techniques, in order to truly understand **why** changes are occurring, and their significance to project beneficiaries. Learning is an important objective for the evaluation, and MDF designed the evaluation process to maximise opportunity for learning for the project team.

## 2.1 Desk Review

A desk review was conducted in order for the evaluation team to gain an understanding of the project context, as well as gather evidence that could be triangulated with primary evidence.

### Secondary Data (project documents)

- Baseline survey results
- Pre-training and post-training participant tests
- Youth survey on transitional justice
- Promotional information on the project (brochures and calls for applications)
- Case studies gathered at the final reflection event
- Project proposal
- Draft Project Final Report
- Project Progress Reports
- Project reflection meeting report
- Videos: youth-led activities at universities (short films, debates)
- Stakeholder consultation meeting minutes
- M&E Plan

## Primary Sources

- Project team semi-structured interviews
- Strategic Partners semi-structured interviews (SCRM and UNPBF)
- Implementing partners and trainers semi-structured interviews (trainers for outcomes 2 and 3, university coordinators, district partner organisations)
- District or university counterpart semi-structured interviews (key person who can give insight into how the project was conducted at the local level, who has a good overview of the target participants and who can describe observations of their behaviour e.g. Vice Chancellor, Head of Department)
- Focus group discussions with training participants (non-Champions)
- Focus group discussions with Champions
- Interviews with minorities, war victims, case study subjects

## 2.2 Selection of focus group discussion youth participants

For Outcome 2, youth participants from four universities were involved in the focus group discussions. The four universities are:

- Sabaragamuwa
- Jaffna
- Eastern
- Ruhuna

MDF interact with at least 20 students at each of the four universities, which represents an almost 30% representation of all university youth participants in the select universities. Individuals were selected using a random number sequencing. These four universities were selected because they represented diverse geographical areas, and from discussions between NPC and MDF at the inception phase, would provide different perceptions of the project.

For Outcome 3, youth participants from four districts which are geographically close to the selected universities were invited for focus group discussions. The four universities are:

- Nuwara Eliya
- Batticaloa
- Jaffna
- Matara

At least 10 individuals from each of the four selected districts were invited to focus group discussions. The individuals were selected using a random number sequencing.

The selection of universities and districts to conduct the focus group discussion for the youth participants was made in order to use the time and budget available for the evaluation efficiently, so that the evaluators could visit four geographical areas:

- 1). Jaffna University, and Jaffna district youth
- 2). Sabaragamuwa University, and Nuwara Eliya district youth
- 3). Eastern University, and Batticaloa district youth
- 4). Ruhuna University, and Matara district youth

In selection of individuals from both university participants and district youth participants, there was a balance of each gender invited.

Originally, girls and boys were to be interviewed separately. However, in some instances, particularly for the district youth, not enough of one particular gender showed up at the appointed time. The district youth participants in particular often travelled specially to attend the focus group discussions and had other appointments to attend. They had all worked together previously. Therefore, we conducted a mixed focus group discussion when appropriate. We neither anticipated, nor observed, particular differences between responses of boys and girls groups. In general, there was fewer participants in the district youth focus group discussions than the university focus group discussions.

Below is a summary of the FGDs and interviews conducted among participant subgroups, and stakeholders. Stakeholders include district and university coordinators, trainers, project team members, and strategic partners. We do not break this down, as the numbers are too small for further statistical analysis. FGDs are analysed as a whole group, and by gender (female, male, or mixed group) or by type of participant (university student / district participant) if interesting patterns emerge. We take the data from each FGD as a whole, and do not break down or analyse what individual youth participants said, and neither did we record what individuals said.

Total FGDs and interviews: 29	
FGDs (youth participants)	15
Interviews (stakeholders)	14

Number of FGDs by gender group: 15	
Female	3
Male	2
Mixed	10

Please refer to explanation in above paragraph about actual breakdown of FGD groups by gender.

Number of FGDs by participant type	
University student	7
District youth	8

The detailed breakdown of individuals in the FGDs (by gender, district, and university) is provided as an annex. Data was gathered from groups rather than individual respondents, and therefore we refer to the group type throughout the evaluation, rather than number of individual females or males.

## 2.3 Data Collection Tools

Focus group discussion, interview, and interaction questions were formulated in a semi-structured format for the MDF evaluators' use. The questions were originally in English, and were be translated to Sinhala and Tamil for the district and university levels. In the translation stage, effort was be made to use simple, non-technical language.

The questions were designed as **open questions**, and each question was supported by several probing questions or keywords.

- Project Team semi-structured interview - English
- Strategic Partner semi-structured interview - English
- Implementing Partner and trainers semi-structured interview – English / Sinhala / Tamil
- District or University counterpart semi-structured interview – English / Sinhala / Tamil
- Training participant FGD (male) – Sinhala / Tamil
- Training participant FGD (female) – Sinhala / Tamil
- Leaders / Champions FGD (mixed gender) – Sinhala / Tamil
- In-depth interviews (minority ethnicity, war victim etc.) – Sinhala / Tamil

Interviews were voice recorded for ease of capturing data, with consent of the participants. Recordings were destroyed as soon as data was transcribed.

Focus groups discussions were with a maximum of 12 participants, for approximately one hour. There was a further distinction between two types of participant focus group discussions:

FGD type 1: students and grassroots youth who took part in the trainings but did not organise a further awareness activity. It was anticipated to interview young men and young women separately (sequential timing) where possible.  
 FGD type 2: students and grassroots youth who took part in the trainings and then

organised the further awareness activity for their peers ('Champions'). These groups were typically of mixed gender.

Several short follow-up interviews were held with participants from the FGDs who are a minority ethnicity/religion, war victim, or who had a particularly interesting story or experience to share. These interviews consisted of a prompt only, and were written separately as case studies by the evaluation team.

## 2.4 Semi-structured interviews (internal, and project stakeholders)

The evaluation team discussed about the project activities, outputs, and observed outcome level results with individuals or small groups of project team members, as well as external project stakeholders.

Strategic Partner / Donor organisations: one representative meeting per organisation (SCRM and UNPBF) was held in Colombo.

Trainers, partner organisations, coordinators: several trainers were interviewed in person or over telephone.

For each of the 4 universities visited, the university coordinator was interviewed.

For each of the 4 districts, the district coordinator was interviewed.

Full overview of the FGDs and interviews is provided as an annex.

## 2.5 Process of the Analysis, and criteria used for judgement

This stage involved collation and triangulation of all documentary evidence and primary data collected on each of the evaluation questions/criteria. A bullet point summary of the preliminary findings was prepared for each evaluation criteria in an evaluation matrix, and the conclusions drawn for each criterion.

It must be noted that the project was relatively short and of limited scope; therefore it was not expected to find strong evidence towards impact-level results, and this does not mean that the project was designed or implemented poorly.

We employed a multi-step process during the analysis, using an evaluation matrix:

- 1). Initial review of the data transcriptions from the FGDs and interviews, and tagging of excerpts and quotations according to evaluation question.

2). Taking of excerpts or quotations from FGDs and interviews, and compilation of these annotations in the evaluation matrix.

3). Collation of number of FGDs and interviews which contain expressions of support for positive or negative judgement of each evaluation question.

4). MDF engaged key staff from NPC, in dialogue about the initial results, in a ‘Sense-Making’ workshop. During the workshop, we engaged in robust discussion of the findings. The aim of the workshop was to engage in a participatory analysis of the initial findings. The output from the exercise provided MDF with meaningful reflection and analysis of ‘why the results are the way they are’, in a contextualised fashion. This is particularly appropriate considering the highly qualitative data collection methods. The highly participatory nature of the workshop will also engage NPC in the research assignment itself, and make the final recommendations more relevant and meaningful, and encourage learning.

5). Finally, the evaluation team come to an agreement about the judgement for each of the evaluation questions. The evaluation team also considered each piece of evidence according to ‘significance’ and ‘reliability’ (for example, where several sources are in consensus it will have a relatively high weighting). This will ensure there is some consistency and balance in making the judgement of each evaluation question. The « score-card » tool was used to appreciate the evaluation criterion (questions) and will serve to arrive at a progression judgement against each question.

Using this process, the evaluation team was able to provide a judgement (Very Good, Good, Moderate, Insufficient, Highly Insufficient), and our opinion about the extent to which the project results meet the criteria, according to the evaluation question. The score-card tool was used to guide the evaluation team towards making consistent conclusions for each question, relative across all evaluation questions.

Score : 1 – 5	Amount and quality of evidence to support judgement
5 : very good	Strong and reliable evidence, from several different sources, pointing towards over-achievement or very positive results (more than expected).
4 : good	Strong and reliable evidence, from several different sources, pointing towards achievement, or positive results.
3 : moderate	Several pieces of evidence which point towards some achievement, or positive results. (This is a positive appraisal).
2 : insufficient	Little evidence to point towards achievement, or positive results. This may be due to either non-achievement, or lack of evidence to draw a positive conclusion.

1 : highly insufficient	Lack of evidence to point towards achievement, or positive results. This may be due to either non-achievement, or lack of evidence to draw a positive conclusion.
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In this report, each conclusion is followed by description of the evidence and findings collected throughout the evaluation, which helped the evaluation team arrive at the conclusions. These descriptions contain direct and summarised from research participants, as requested in the TOR.

## 3 Assessment of the Theory of Change and Relevance

### 3.1.1 a. To what extent did the project consider the local context, the conflict drivers, and the needs of the stakeholders?

Evaluation conclusion: **Very Good; the project to a large extent did consider the local context and needs of stakeholders.**

The project did consider the local context and the needs of the stakeholders. There was a need to raise awareness about transitional justice among young people in Sri Lanka, as there is no other initiative specifically targeting this group nation-wide.

Findings and supporting evidence:

***The project fills a gap in the current work being implemented in Sri Lanka towards transitional justice and youth.***

National level stakeholders, and district and university-level partners, reported that the NPC project was unique and complementary to other work being undertaken by other development actors, including by government initiatives. More than 90% of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned that the project was working on an area (transitional justice for youth) that was not being specifically worked on by any other initiative in Sri Lanka. These stakeholders are active in the field of peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, and could have a good idea of the programmatic landscape. They highlighted that the project is one of the first of the peace-building initiatives to specifically target university youth. The project is the first of its kind to specifically target young people with transitional justice, particularly potential thought leaders. Previously, some related projects had specifically worked with women's platforms. Furthermore, evaluation respondents appreciated the project's strategy to target youth, saying that university-educated young people can be influential thought leaders. The UNPBF representative pointed out that it was important for young potential local government officers to understand and to make decisions based on principles of transitional justice. ***The project identified and acted towards a need to build awareness about transitional justice in Sri Lanka among young people.***

In more than 50% of all FGDs with participants, and with stakeholders, it was explicitly mentioned that the project was working towards addressing an awareness gap about transitional justice among young people. Some reiterated that background was provided by the project team at the start of the trainings, and that a baseline study had been administered among youth at the participant universities and district areas, to show that there was indeed very little awareness about the concept of transitional justice (less than 40% of the youth surveyed during the baseline study had heard of the concept).

The evaluators found that not only is there a strong perception that there is a lack of awareness about reconciliation mechanisms and social cohesion, but also that youth are faced with being misinformed or subject to misleading political rhetoric, especially in recent years. This is demonstrated strongly in the project's baseline study, with less than 40% of youth surveyed having even heard of 'transitional justice'. 93% of district youth had never had the chance to engage in conversation about the topic, and more than 98% of university youth who responded to the baseline survey said that they had never had a conversation about transitional justice. One of the NPC staff who was involved in the design of the project explained: "One of the greatest problems we have is the lack of awareness. We need to increase the general awareness in the population, about what transitional justice means. The negativity we have is due to political rhetoric. It doesn't explain why it is needed, that dealing with the past is necessary, for the victims and the bystanders who are affected, and that it is equally needed by the North as well as the South. That understanding is needed at the grassroots level." This is backed up by research findings, which show that close to two-thirds of young people exhibited only a little awareness about reconciliation initiatives.<sup>1</sup> This view is also supported by stakeholders who regularly interact with young people. One university professor, who has been teaching law for more than 15 years, said, "Young people do not know the details of what happened in 1989, or during the war. It is not discussed by families. They do not know the origins or the root causes, they have only been told that there was a 'bad guy' side. I had to explain each issue and how it evolved." Like this, it was said that young people had not been exposed to the concept in an objective way. One participant explained his experience of the project: "At first, it was an alien concept. But after the resolution, it has been branded as a negative concept." One trainer mentioned: "I observed that more than 90% of them [participants] both in university and youth programmes, told that they haven't heard about transitional justice before. They may have heard the words 'transitional justice', but did not have a proper understanding of it." "Present youth are future leaders and we can impart the knowledge if we get in to a decision making positions," explained some of the youth participants. One champion from Ruhuna University expanded on this: ""As university students we have the credibility still in general public to discuss and intervene in such important national issues."

### **3.1.2 b. To what extent was the project designed on a conflict analysis, and more broadly, the peacebuilding priorities of the country?**

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

It can be concluded that the project was designed based on the peacebuilding priorities and commitments of the country.. While no specific conflict analysis was found to be referenced regarding the project design process, youth strategy has been recognised as an important part of the Sri Lanka Peacebuilding Priority Plan.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Survey on youth knowledge, attitudes and perceptions about transitional justice, presented at the final project reflection meeting, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Sri Lanka Peacebuilding Priority Plan, April 2017

Findings and supporting evidence:

***There is recognition among project stakeholders that Sri Lanka has an obligation to fulfil human rights commitments, both to be accountable to citizens who have suffered losses, and to the international community.***

Government counterparts, including SCRM and the Prime Minister's Office, supported the implementation of the project, especially to enable access to the universities. Government support shows that the project was aligned with government priority; in fact, the fact that the SCRM signed onto the project reflects the government's commitment. The provision of GIYP funding for Sri Lanka by UNPBF, and awarding of project funds to NPC, is also based on the relevance of the project to the country context.

### **3.1.3 c. Was the theory of change coherent? Did it sufficiently account for the context in the universities and grassroots levels?**

*Theory of Change (taken from the revised M&E plan document): IF Tamil and Sinhalese youth leaders, students, and future lawyers, are trained and motivated to become transitional justice 'insider mediators' AND young people across both ethnic groups have their concerns about transitional justice addressed and feel included in the process to establish a transitional justice mechanism, THEN young people across both ethnic religious groups will support legitimate non-violent means to address past injustices through a transitional justice mechanism, THEREFORE contributing to the inclusiveness, efficacy, and durability of peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.*

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The Theory of Change for the project was logical and consistent; however, the context and needs of the target groups in different locations meant that a one-size-fits-all intervention was not appropriate for all groups.

Findings and supporting evidence:

***The key logic of the TOC and project design was how the training methodology directly contributed to the overall goal of youth engagement and becoming 'insider mediators'. The TOC is therefore logical, as receiving training AND having concerns addressed are both key components towards the overall goal.***

Almost all (96%) of both youth FGD groups and stakeholder interviewees expressed that the methodology of the project, involving trainings designed in a way to be highly interactive and take into consideration the views of the participants, was a key systematic way of increasing engagement in the target group towards transitional justice.

One trainer mentioned: "The flow of the sessions was another success factor, especially with the youth. The trainers have paid sufficient attention to setting a proper background to discuss this matter with youth. Understanding the nature of youth, and preparedness to address their desires, was there." A representative of the Matara champions explained:

“We found the flow of the training was really effective; previously we had an offensive idea on transitional justice. We knew only the deaths of army soldiers, and we felt that after the war, everything was settled. But the flow of the training opened our eyes to think on the other side of the story.” Another participant described how the flow of the training helped to increase empathy and critical thinking: “Youth who participated were supporting extremist ideas. But at the end of the programme, they changed their points of view, and realized that their initial perceptions were not correct. This change was created due to the training methodology. Participatory tools and techniques helped them to engage and change their attitudes.”

A key element of the training methodology was to facilitate space for participants to express their opinions, and have their questions answered. One participant, who has now become a resource person for transitional justice, explained: “The main reason for my transformation is this because they took our questions into consideration... at first I thought it was for Tamils only.... that is a good way to transform youth.” One youth champion mentioned: “To be honest, I had genuine concerns against transitional justice and I asked questions in the programme. I got reasonable answers theoretically, then I started to believe those concepts, and those were automatically incorporated to my work.”

**The project team consulted with the stakeholders, district organisations, university representatives, and youth about the project design.**

While more than 40% of the youth FGD participants and the stakeholder interviewees were aware of that consultations were done at the project design phase, 37% also mentioned that more consultation could have been done. Out of the participant groups, this was mentioned equally between the female, male, and mixed groups. However, it was mentioned by multiple groups in Jaffna, Sabaragamuwa, and Nuwara Eliya areas. This suggests that it is a common perception among the youth participants in those specific areas.

District participants from Batticaloa reported that in 2017, there was some discussion about the “political context” for some project work. NPC visited district based organizations and conducted an information session and assessment with DIRC members, including youth, before implementation of the project. However, some students from the universities, were not aware about the consultation process, and so felt that it would have been better to have a more thorough consultation, as well as more follow up with the participants after the trainings, as expressed by one respondent: “The team got to know young people when they worked with them. But before that, there was no research or information collection on how people (us university students) perceive this transitional justice concept.” This sentiment, expressed similarly at several of the universities, could be due to the topic being new to the respondents, rather than a reflection of the consultation process. “The team had to identify positive as well as challenging reactions ‘on the go’, and adjust the implementation strategy from time to time. Evaluating participants’ knowledge before and after the training made it somewhat clear about the context and level of understanding about the issues, and how they could look at

transitional justice from a different angle.” NPC also emphasised how the consultation process led to the development of a selection criteria for training participants. The university students as burgeoning intellectuals and thought leaders in their age category were seen as being influential. Also, community youth as a category, on account of their engagement with varied networks, were also considered to be an important constituency.

#### **3.1.4 d. Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and attainment of its objectives?**

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The project activities and outputs were consistent with the overall goal and objectives, and the project team modified the implementation approach throughout the project in order to reach the objectives.

Findings and supporting evidence:

***The team had differing visions about what success in the project would look like; however, all visions were aligned with the objectives.***

Some project members had strong goals for achieving the project activities, for example, that the project activities needed to be completed within 18 months, and that there was a need to balance the quantity needed, with quality. Other team members had in mind a longer-term broader vision of success. For example, they recognised that the 3 outcomes and corresponding activities were designed to raise awareness, address myths, and combat misunderstandings, which would lead the participants to evolve an understanding as to the underlying basis for transitional justice, and compel them to act as internal mediators within their own sphere, which would in turn lead to broader change in society. The team saw the need to address misconceptions about transitional justice for youth, kept in mind the training design to guide the participants to understand, have a voice in the issue, beyond a passive take-up of knowledge.

#### **3.1.5 e. Compared to the beginning of the project, to what extent are the objectives of the project still valid at its end?**

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The objectives of the project are still valid; it is even more imperative since the first batch of participants strongly sees the relevance of the learning and that the need still exists. However, the changing political landscape means that it is not certain that space for social cohesion initiatives will be continued.

Findings and supporting evidence:

Almost all (93%) of participants, project stakeholders, government and non-government experts on the peace process in Sri Lanka see the objectives and the methodology of the project as relevant, at the time of the evaluation.

Students said: "No matter if the government is not supporting this, we still feel that it is valid"; "We are still in the transitional period; we are not fully healed. It is reflected from the results of recent presidential election results. It showed a clear division between North and South", "Incidents like the Easter attack continuously remind us about the validity of such concepts as transitional justice." This demonstrates the success of the interventions as the thought leaders, or university students are continuing to say that transitional justice remains relevant, even though the government has withdrawn from the process. This clearly demonstrates their transition into internal mediators from being just recipients of information. Even though the political landscape may be changing, the students who participated in the project believe that it is necessary to honour commitments: "There are certain promises made by the government of Sri Lanka to the international community, and the ruling party has to honour this." "In 2015, in the UN-HR convention we have agreed upon some activities and we are still bound by this as the state of Sri Lanka. To keep our international image and obligations, we have to commit and cannot neglect this." Participants developed empathy and recognised that there are problems which have not been fully resolved, and that a transitional justice process is necessary more than ever: "We think that the war is over, and there is peace. But it is not the case. Even though there is no killing, they (people from north of Sri Lanka) still suffer from structural problems - like missing persons. The situation is the same in the south. Therefore, concepts like transitional justice are valid for longer years in the future". Furthermore, youth and stakeholders saw it as imperative, for social and economic reasons, to develop a real environment of peace: "Digana, and incidents after Easter, if the politicians foster this, it will be difficult to encourage cohesion. If we do not encourage cohesion, there will negative consequences on the economy. We need youth from all ethnicities to participate in the economy." Youth and stakeholders were also optimistic that even though there is a change in the political landscape, the current government has a good opportunity to foster cohesion. One representative from Ruhuna summed this up: "There are 3 sectors – the private sector, public sector, and social sector. You need all 3 of the movements, to move forward as a country. There were some restrictions during the war, but this new government will not be in that environment.... they may not follow what they did before."

## 4 Efficiency

### 4.1.1 a. Were activities designed to maximise cost efficiency? Did the project provide value for money?

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The project team used the budget wisely to deliver activities, and encourage higher levels of engagement with participants. Some changes in implementation were made, including provision of a higher quality venue and residential instead of non-residential trainings in the latter part of the implementation phase. These changes incurred slightly higher costs; however, delivered better results. The project team was able to use all the budget for creating results and monitoring.

Findings and evidence:

***Students having access to transportation funds, and decent venues, helped to create good quality engagement.***

One coordinator corroborated: "Transportation was taken care of for me, and small allowance for the students. The simultaneous translation was good. The venue was fine. The university administration gave full cooperation." "The budget was used very economically and had good fund management. The resource person fee paid by the NPC for the first trainings, and rest were done by the champions in voluntary service." The trainings in the later half of the project were conducted in external venues instead of in the universities. University and district coordinators in particular discussed the transportation funds and venue in their interviews; almost 50% said that good quality engagement was created through these measures, which enabled access for participants. Interestingly, two district coordinators had the opinion that cheaper venues could have been used.

***The university students had access to funds to conduct their follow-up activities, and the project team made decisions to balance the budget against quality of activities.***

Student groups from 9 universities fully utilised these funds. Groups comprised equally of males and females, by design of the project. The age of students, as well as the ethnic background, varied and were reflective of the general student body of their respective universities. One university coordinator observed: "The budget for the follow-up activity led by the students (LKR 100,000/-) was marginal, and students seemed to struggle to manage it with different activities that they planned (t-shirt printing, etc). If it was more, I think that students would have done more at their capacity. Other than that I do not see any shortage of budget." "We can't say the budget was not sufficient. However, sometimes there are some extended requests from some beneficiaries (for example for the disabled). But we could not address those."

#### 4.1.2 b. Were objectives achieved on time?

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The project team made sure that all stipulated activities for outcomes 2 and 3 were delivered on time by utilising networks; any project objectives which were not achieved on time (Outcome 1), or timeframe changed, was due to external factors. While LAW was able to support representatives at the University of Jaffna develop a plan to update the curriculum and develop a hub for transitional justice,

Findings and evidence:

***NPC utilised a network of coordinators, project partners, and youth leaders to ensure the activities were able to be delivered.***

As part of the evolution of the project intervention, TORs were created for university coordinators, and the project team worked with the Vice Chancellors to get them appointed. This helped to ensure participation among the target groups.. The project approached each university separately, according to the perceived unique challenges and opportunities of that institution (such as academic calendar, strikes, attitude of the Vice Chancellor to the topic of transitional justice, among others). The students unions were also useful and some cooperated well, for example in Sabaragamuwa, where they saw the importance of spreading the message. In Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, even though the project was not able to realize the full intervention, at first the student union had been cooperative. For the district interventions, the project team was able to work with district counterparts who already had access to an engaged group of young persons. The actual participants were selected against a set of criteria, by means of an application process. Criteria for selection by the university or district coordinator included: gender balance, ethnic diversity, age/university level, submission of a motivation statement. The criteria was provided to the coordinator, and the coordinator was able to use this as a guide and make the final decision on selection of project participants.

The project was able to be flexible in timing; when the universities were inaccessible due to strikes, the project was able to use the time to deliver in the district activities.

***The University of Jaffna Law Department is currently reviewing the curriculum.***

From interviews with the representative from the Law Department, who also participated in the Outcome 1 activities, the department is going through the process to submit the revised curriculum to the university body, before forwarding it to the national body in charge of curriculum approvals. This is a process which take time. However, from speaking with the implementing partner of Outcome 1, it was not envisioned that this process would be complete before the end of the project; the objective was to give the Law Department the tools and technical expertise to be able to manage this process, and facilitate them to begin to decide how they would implement it in their university. From that point, it was expected that the Law Department would manage the process themselves, with full ownership.

#### 4.1.3 c. How timely and responsive was the PBF intervention?

Evaluation conclusion: **Very good**

The PBF funding and support for the project came at an opportune time in the political context, and provided good support for the NPC team.

More than half of the stakeholders interviewed, who include national experts on peacebuilding in Sri Lanka, asserted that the funding was awarded to the project at an appropriate time according to the political context.

The project funding was provided through GYPI, which is a competitive funding opportunity. The project concept was developed by the NPC team, and submitted for evaluation for funding. Only later, other experts were engaged to develop the M&E plan, and for LAW to provide linkage to the Harvard Law School. The UNPBF became involved after the project concept was approved. The major success factor in the project operations was that the funding was provided during a conducive political environment which supported development of peacebuilding initiatives. The project was thus timely for Sri Lanka, and aligned with the country's commitment to the UN HR resolution. NPC also expressed appreciation with the UNPBF's flexibility to adopt the activity implementation mechanisms according to the context and learnings throughout the project, as well as the UNPBF team in Colombo to prompt response queries, provide feedback, and speed up the approval process with the New York office of UNPBF.

#### 4.1.4 d. How well did the monitoring system work?

Evaluation conclusion: **Moderate**

While the M&E system was professionally designed and concentrated on an appropriate level of expected achievement, more could be done to monitor changes with participants following the activities.

Findings and Evidence:

##### ***A professional firm was hired to revise the M&E framework.***

When the grant was awarded, there were a lot of comments from UNPBF on the results framework. LAW, who took responsibility for revising the framework, used a participatory process to revise this. NPC was able to use the revised M&E framework more easily. However, the framework was designed to have very few outcome indicators, and no specific methodology in the framework to capture outcome level changes in behaviour. Indicators for changes in behaviour at the outcome level could include, for example, incidence of project participants initiating their own dialogue with the community, engaging in advocacy, or fully self-organising awareness events within their universities. This was done for a reason; the expectation of the project within 18 months was that it would develop within the participants the correct knowledge of transitional justice, and

create some level of willingness and motivation to engage in the concept of transitional justice.

***Participants and stakeholders observed that there were some changes and results of the intervention that the project team may have missed. There was no formal, continuous monitoring system to measure specific indicators for outcome level, because they were beyond the scope and timeframe of the project.***

Three-quarters of FGD groups and stakeholders interviewed thought that there were changes and results due to the intervention, that the project team may not have captured or been aware of. All of the female FGD groups were in agreement with this observation. However, students from Jaffna University, and district youth from Matara in particular, also mentioned that they did see the project team observing and adapting to the reaction of the participants. Among the stakeholders who were working directly with the participants, including trainers, university and district coordinators, all but one person saw changes and results in the participants, which they thought the project team was not able to capture in the formal monitoring system. However, most (more than 50%) also observed that the project team informally used observation, feedback, and communication with participants to improve the implementation of the project.

One district counterpart observed: “There was no way to check whether intended messages went across such channels after follow-up training.” One champion from Matara criticised, “NGOs design projects, deliver activities, take some photos, and go away. Then sometimes persons like you come and ask questions about whether it is successful. But there is no mechanism to tap or measure the real change of the people. How could you assure that the program made a real change in the area?” There were also several questions from counterparts and coordinators, about whether the project team was able to monitor outcome level results, or follow up with participants. There is evidence relating to outcome-level changes, particularly from the final event organised, as well as the knowledge of the project team and the university and district coordinators, although these were not included as specific indicators. The results framework was specifically designed to capture the achievement of activities and changes expected within the scope of the project. This could, in fact, point toward a need to continue with the project, and in future to capture more medium to longer-term outcome-level results.

***However, the project team did informally use observations and feedback from the participants, communication with some participants, to keep track of the progress and reaction. The final reflection event and champions meeting provided opportunities to capture changes with individual participants. The output from these events contains valuable information.***

The project team realized that some changes were needed throughout the project, and made decisions accordingly. For example, the project team started to facilitate more interactive sessions as part of the training, as opposed to letting the experts deliver lectures for the entirety. This was based on feedback and observation with the training participants. One university counterpart appreciated that: “NPC always had close

coordination and information sharing with me about the progress of each and every level at work. Feedback and review was done on the progress of the project. After the training, even following support was received.” The final reflection meeting, with youth survey research findings presentation, and the champions meeting, were not originally part of the project plan, but due to availability in time and funds, as well as relevance and alignment with the original intervention, prompted the project team to conduct these activities.

## 5 Effectiveness

### 5.1.1 a. To what extent were the objectives achieved?

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The project was able to increase knowledge levels about transitional justice; but even more so, to influence positive attitudes and willingness towards transitional justice mechanisms in Sri Lanka among project participants, as well as to compel them to spread knowledge and engage in dialogue with others. This was achieved among both university youth (outcome 2), and district youth (outcome 3). Outcome 1, which was implemented under the primary responsibility of LAW, showed progress towards completion of the objectives, although the full realization of the intervention is dependant on approvals by various authorities.

<p>Outcome 1: Ethnically diverse law students develop legal knowledge and skills required to help advocate for and implement a transitional justice mechanism.</p>	<p>Outcome 1 has not been realized by the time of the evaluation, although there is progress towards the output-level results. The Human Rights Clinic is currently not established or operational, as it is pending approvals (output 1.1); the curriculum is not yet updated, although appropriate work has been done by project coordinators it is pending approval by various authorities (output 1.2); the short interactive law course was developed and delivered (output 1.3).</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Ethnically diverse university students help disseminate correct information and facilitate dialogue on transitional justice and reconciliation benefits and approaches.</p>	<p>There is evidence to show that members of the university project target group have indeed engaged in awareness-raising and dialogue on transitional justice, because of the NPC project intervention.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Community youth leaders are mobilized to increase understanding of peace building within local youth groups.</p>	<p>There is evidence to show that participants among the district-level youth have indeed organised to disseminate understanding of peace building to their respective local youth, because of the NPC project intervention.</p>

Findings and evidence:

***Project participants' knowledge about transitional justice has increased.***

98% of university students, and 93% of district youth, reported in the baseline survey that they had never had a conversation about transitional justice. After the intervention, almost all participants were able to answer multiple knowledge-based questions on the topic, and cited that they had been able to discuss the topic with others and have facilitated trainings among their peers on the topic.

In addition, 100% of the youth participant FGDs, and 100% of the interviews with stakeholders who had direct interaction with the project participants (district and university coordinators, trainers, project team members, but not strategic partners), asserted that they had seen direct evidence that participants' knowledge of transitional justice had increased. Strategic partners interviewed emphasised that it was because they had not had much direct contact with participants, that they were not able to provide comment on this aspect.

The training was the first engagement that the participants had been exposed to about transitional justice. There were different understandings, and the trainers and NPC team reported to the evaluators that they had observed this in the universities and the district trainings. The trainings tried to bring an objective understanding of history. It was surprising to the trainers and coordinators that the youth understanding was very limited at the start of the trainings. It was reported that "The discussion in Jaffna at the start was extremely hostile, especially the reaction to the notion that there were war crimes on both sides. They thought that only Sinhala army could commit war crimes, and this meant killing LTTE cadres." According to the project team, such misunderstandings could be because of different mythologies across regions, rather than a national story. Even though the previous government had wanted to carry out the reconciliation framework, the correct communication to the public was not successful. Another trainer had the opinion that the level of understanding at the start was far below what is expected from a university student, and that there was no difference at all between general youth and university students. Results from the post-training tests, and feedback from the participants, showed that their awareness of transitional justice concepts, and applicability to Sri Lanka, had increased significantly. One participant perceived that the programme had been successful for most of the other participants in creating awareness, and sharing knowledge. Appraisal by transitional justice experts who saw the student-led activities, or videos of these events, thought that they were able to explain the concept of transitional justice very well, and this was a sign of good and correct take-up of knowledge of transitional justice.

***Participants developed willingness and positive attitudes towards transitional justice mechanisms.***

A majority (3/4) of focus group discussions with participants, among both university student participants and district youth, revealed that they had developed willingness towards advocating for transitional justice, whether formally or informally.

More so than technical knowledge, a dramatic shift in participants' attitude towards transitional justice was observed and reported in the evaluation data. Throughout the trainings, participants became more open to discuss tricky issues, and to try to resolve concerns, and look for solutions. In the district areas, they performed better than the project team expected, especially in areas that were close to the line of conflict between government and anti-government forces during the war. They were able to talk about the issues very sensitively, because they had really faced the war, and were able to relate it to their experiences. Kurunegala youth were very interactive, even though it was their first time learning about transitional justice. There were a few political questions, for example about reparation – for example, whether it is only for Tamils. Throughout the training period, the trainers and project team observed that one of the prevailing myths in the south is that transitional justice it is only for the north and east, and there were assertions that it was an international intervention. Trainers and NPC project team members observed that at the beginning, participants were very silent, they did not ask questions. When the training moved forward, they started to question and become open. One particular example was a youth who was very much prejudiced, but by the end of the intervention in his area, he took it upon himself to go and talk about it with others. That was not a deliberate, structured follow up by the project team, it was of his own accord. That was quite significant.

After accepting the concept of transitional justice, the participants started not only being able to replicate correct definitions and meanings, but also form their own opinions and apply the concept to develop their own solutions for Sri Lanka. In the short stories and movies which were produced by students for the follow-up initiatives, the effort to try to find points of reconciliation is woven in. Trainers observed that the documentary shown took the approach to ask: what can we do to heal, move forward? The students engaged with the question. This was a level beyond merely communicating about an aspect of transitional justice. Another trainer observed that most participants were able to show some sensitive thoughts during the training. They were talking about their feelings, their desperation, and they felt that they have failed society, and abandoned society. In contrast, the trainer reported that Colombo and Kelaniya university students at first did not understand at all what the problem was. They understood that the so-called armed group was bad, and should be eliminated. The trainer tried to tell some stories and make them understand. After the session, the NPC facilitated some activities. Then, once they started to tell their own ideas, the trainer noticed there was a change. The students “came down” somewhat, started to think about the future, and expressed that they did not want to continue the same problem down to other generations. Similar observations about the process were observed and reported. As a result of the training, students expressed beliefs that there should be reparations, accountability processes, truth-finding, reconciliation, and finding the root causes to the war. When the discussion turned to Sri Lanka, the participants, including minorities, became highly engaged in discussion. The

recounted from their own knowledge, about what people had witnessed during conflict. Others in the audience also become concerned about these stories.

Participants had also noted this transformation. District participants explained: "There is a perception within Sinhala & Muslim Communities that transitional justice is a process to benefit only Tamils. But those participants from Sinhala and Muslim communities had a chance to understand the broader meaning of the concept. It is good that some activists were created from those communities, to work on the transitional justice concept." The Matara Champions said, "We felt at the beginning this was kind of white elephant concept. The concept was not familiar to us, as it was an opening of our minds, and a new thinking pattern." The champion students at Ruhuna University said, "We had some doubts on this project and the concept, due to the opinion on NGO work in the general public. The concept itself was new to us. The validity and relevance was cleared up during sessions we had in three-day training. This cleared most students' minds from misconceptions." "Before the training, we thought that only Tamils were affected by the war. Through the training we got to know that all citizens in Sri Lanka, representing all ethnicities directly or indirectly, were affected by the war". Students from the Eastern University described, "There was a change within ourselves. The way we looked at the Sinhalese community completely changed. We now know there is some structural background to the war, rather than it being one community against another."

***Participants gained skills to manage discussions about transitional justice, and about the training, with others (peers and family, and in some cases politicians).***

The third day of the NPC workshop was about how to spread the message, and how to deal with tricky questions. After the trainings, the NPC and other experts who saw the student-led activities saw youth demonstrating an ability to explain and manage a dialogue on transitional justice with other youth, in different and appropriate ways. Participants, as well as university coordinators, saw that after the trainings, the participants went back to their hostel or their home and shared their experience of the day with peers and family. Students described this, "in the gatherings and general events also we used our knowledge more than others, who do not know this concept. But there was resistance at times." It was also reported that at Jaffna University, several female students presented questions and demands to local politicians contesting in the election, who had come to the university to participate in an open-invite panel discussion.

65% of the 'champions', the participants who had participated at all levels in the intervention, have now had the opportunity to meet policy makers or figures who have influence on peacebuilding processes in Sri Lanka. According to the baseline survey, almost none of these had access or knowledge about the topic before the intervention.

***Participants at Wayamba University responded negatively to the training, and participants at Peradeniya University did not have the opportunity to complete their own follow-up activities.***

At this particular training, students did not accept the concepts put across to them. Various potential reasons were cited: that the trainer had a strong Tamil accent and that may have triggered the students, that they did not have any academic background in humanities or social science. All of the participants were from the IT and Agriculture faculties, and the majority were Sinhala, with few Muslims. As such, they did not have a foundation in discussing social issues, the 'war hero' mindset, and that many of them may have lost a sibling in the war.

**5.1.2 b. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the project objectives? How did the project adapt to changes in the project context, and to differing perceptions and attitudes of project participants to the potentially controversial themes of Transitional Justice?**

Evaluation conclusion: **Very good**

Throughout the project, critical factors for success emerged, including selection of participants and coordinators, and the methodology of the training. The project made several decisions to adapt to changes and positive/negative responses to the intervention. For example, in the case of the negative reaction of students at Wayamba University to the training, the project team was able to bring in an expert facilitator quickly before continuing with the programme.

***Participant selection was carefully considered, and criteria were employed.***

In general, stakeholders and participants reported positively about the participant selection criteria and process. More than half the participant respondents FGD groups, including male, female, and mixed groups, and from both universities and district interventions, specifically spoke about the criteria and selection process. They said that not only did it seem fair, but they thought it actually contributed to the success of the project by raising motivation of the participants who were selected. They stated that since there were criteria, the selection did not seem unfair, which increased motivation to join by those who may be hesitant of selection processes. In the districts, participants selected were already active young citizens involved in social movements, are leaders among their peers, who have a regular profile in development and peacebuilding initiatives. But in the universities, participants were selected based on their profile, with a focus on those who would benefit more from the attitude transformation. Therefore, district youth participants may benefit more from acquiring a toolkit of knowledge about transitional justice, while university participants may benefit more from the attitude transformation. In Peradeniya University, there was only one male, but this due to the composition of the student body in the targeted department. Second and third year students were selected, because first year is a little 'clueless', and the last year is about to pass out. In most cases, students were selected from relevant departments, such as law, politics, sociology, as well as science. One partner explained their satisfaction with one aspect of the participant selection, that in universities, there were "fresh" participants in the project, and not the "same familiar faces that you see everywhere". Therefore, it seems that the project has exposed a broader target group to the concept of transitional justice. In the university,

since this was a very fresh topic for the participants, “they were really engaged and interested, and questioned a lot.” It was observed that in the districts, this kind of event and training is more familiar to the participants, and so they were more passive and less engaged. According to the pre and post training evaluations, the subject was entirely new to both university students and district youth; however, trainers reported that the university students were more observedly engaged, and thought it was because the modality was new to them, while district youth are used to attending trainings.

***Coordinators with strong connections and authority, endorsement from their Vice Chancellor, and interest in the subject were effective in ensuring that participants were engaged.***

Those coordinators who have legitimacy, good rapport and connection with the students, are well recognised, and connected to the topic, were more successful in engaging students in the project. In the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, the evaluators could observe this effect in the participation of the students themselves in the FGDs. Although many of the university students had already passed out, they all came for the evaluation (40+ participants), even though they travelled from far away. We also observed that if the coordinator had an influence over the career development of the participants, they are more likely to be involved in a peacebuilding pathway in their young career. Some coordinators were committed to get the students engaged in the issues of the country, get them onto a relevant career path, not only to achieve participation in the trainings. One motivation for the coordinators was that they were able to utilise this opportunity to elevate their profile and relevance in the university. One coordinator in particular described as being an expert in the area, has been very active with the projects, he knows the history, network in the university, rules and procedures, and so was able to work effectively to help achieve the aims of the project. Another coordinator is a well recognised figure on social cohesion in the North, and some champions in Jaffna appreciated his support to get them more involved in the peacebuilding effort since the NPC project. District partners were selected, who are practical, who already work with youth, and who are familiar with local authorities, familiar with the context, and the thematic area (peace and reconciliation). In Sabaragamuwa, the students reported to the evaluators that they were originally not willing to engage on the issue of transitional justice, but said that it was only due to the influence of the coordinator that they accepted the concepts. In cases where the intervention was not successful inside universities, this was in some part reportedly due to the coordinators not accepting the concept or not being willing to follow up with the student-led activities.

In addition, support from the government counterpart and formal partnership allowed the project to enter the universities. Managing to gain formal access to the university students through tapping into networks was a major success factor in the project.

***The methodology of the training and project activity was appropriate for the youth audience.***

One of the success factors of the project was the methodology of the training and interaction with young people. The reaction to the training was closely monitored and the methodology re-developed by the NPC team, who supported the facilitation rather than completely handing it over to external trainers. The NPC team knows the participants very well, and many stakeholders and participants commented that the team was highly dedicated and connected well with the young participants. The NPC team could see that the training participants were learning valuable knowledge in the technical sessions, and decided that this could be complemented by more interactive sessions and discussions, and delivered these elements. During the very earliest trainings of the project, the NPC project team observed that the training content was very knowledge-based. They decided to facilitate an additional element to the training, the film screening and discussion.

***Facilities to enable students to access and participate in the trainings are essential for meaningful and fair engagement with the project.***

Some participants are based in far away areas to the project implementation places. The small travel allowance was essential for them to fully attend.

Another decision that was made part way through the project, was to conduct the trainings at a residential venue, and have provisions such as food provided for the participants. This ensured that the participants were able to fully enjoy the atmosphere, and create essential bonds and networks with other participants. If it were not for this, participants would be less engaged in the program, and would have less sustained relationships with each other and the project team to engage in transitional justice mechanisms going forward.

## 6 Impact

### 6.1.1 a. What has happened as a result of the project? What were some of the unexpected results (positive or negative) that the project had?

Evaluation conclusion: **Good**

The project induced positive results, and indications of direction towards impact. However, this is mostly on individual level, for direct participants.

***Participants spread the message about transitional justice to others, and engaged in further dialogue with peers and family about the topic.***

More than half of the evaluation research FGD group and interviewees who were participants, trainers, project team members, coordinators, cited direct observation of participants engaging in dialogue with others directly after the trainings. Strategic partners explained that they do not have enough direct contact with participants to observe this.

As well as initiating their own events, for example at orientation weeks, project participants reported that, as individuals or small groups of self-initiated peers, they had purposefully talked about what they had learnt in the trainings to others. There are several instances of this, using different means. Some of the community youth wanted to make a YouTube channel, or community drama, which could be taken around the country. In Ruhuna, one student is good at rapping. After the program, he started to make songs about transitional justice. One student in Batticaloa, who was not an original participant or champion, but had come to the follow-up event, started making paintings on the theme of transitional justice, and he did this for the school. One participant said: "Within friend circles and families, we discussed about the event and what we learnt. It was not easy. One of my friends at The University of Moratuwa, at Prabhakaran's birthday, Tamil students were giving a small celebration and putting some posts in social media. Normally Sinhala students opposed it. But with my friends, I opposed their attitude. I said it was not right to celebrate a terrorist organisation. But there should be a space for families or individuals to commemorate their loved ones (whether they are LTTE cadres or not), there should be a right." Ruhuna Champions reported that they did one joint event with community group (CDC) in Kamburugamuwa, in addition to the NPC led events. These interactions tended to happen immediately after the trainings; however, it is unclear whether this peer-to-peer influencing is sustained over time.

There are two districts in particular where participant FGD groups said that participants either did not, or were not able, to engage in discussion with others about transitional justice. In Batticaloa, the female FGD group, the mixed gender FGD group, and even the mixed gender 'champions' group where participants have been engaged to the highest levels in the intervention, stated that they did not see participants engaging in

conversation with others about transitional justice, even after the trainings. In Nuwara Eliya district, both the male and female FGD groups stated that they did not observe this.

***Some participants are pursuing further specific academic studies on transitional justice.***

One-third of all respondents cited instances where they knew of a specific person who is continuing their higher education about transitional justice.

These findings were reported from the university representatives, and some participants to whom the higher studies students are known. A final year student from Ruhuna did her final year thesis on transitional justice. She had already had a plan to do something else, but she got an opportunity in London for a fellowship for several weeks, and this experience encouraged her to develop her research on the topic of transitional justice. One student from Jaffna also did his research on transitional justice. The Eastern University coordinator is now doing PhD on transitional justice. In Uva Wellassa University, one lecturer has given the assignment, worth 4 marks, on the topic. In Colombo University, there is one student under the coordinator, doing her masters, who has now graduated and is working in the same department. She was arguing for an aspect of transitional justice to be woven into the preamble of the constitution. Many of the participants are studying sociology and political science. In their final year exam, there was a question about peacebuilding and transitional justice: "how sustainable peace in Sri Lanka could be developed through transitional justice." Students at the Eastern University were able to select this question, and the participants received good marks. "I am thinking of putting 'Current Social Conflicts in Sri Lanka' as the topic of my final year thesis," one champion from the Eastern University told us. "Some of us contributed as enumerators of a research conducted by the department," from the Ruhuna University Champions.

One of the significant findings, a result that was not originally envisioned, was that the universities would begin to take it up as a part of the curriculum, or that lecturers would include aspects of transitional justice into their modules. Because of this, and the post-graduate studies, it has become a legitimate topic of academic pursuit in Sri Lanka. That is a significant change. It is closer to becoming a mainstream theme, rather than a fringe topic. In Sabaragamuwa, representatives are already in discussion to organise a course within the curriculum on peace and conflict transformation. In addition, they will organise a skill-based course for recent graduates, on peace and conflict transformation, and how to develop peacebuilding proposals. With the basic qualification and the skill qualification available, there would be a lot of opportunities and for career prospects in this area for graduates.

***Participants want to respond to real-world issues as they arise.***

In almost all of the participant FGDs, including males and females from all four districts and universities, it was expressed that they and their fellow participants feel an urge to use their new knowledge and interest in peacebuilding to respond to negative events in their community or nation. More than half of the stakeholder interviewees, who interact with the participants, cited that they had seen evidence of the participants seeking ways

to respond positively to conflict-related events, since their participation in the intervention.

The project team reported that after Easter Sunday, some of the participants called the team, asking if there was anything they were able to do under the purview of NPC. One participant described an exchange on Facebook after the Easter Sunday attacks, and the ethnic dynamics that played out on social media platforms, and how his attitude to becoming involved had changed; he was more aware of what hate speech and incendiary rhetoric was and was less inclined to share it. Participants also expressed desire to see change happen with marginalised community members, for example in the FGDs there was discussion about the ex-combatants who are settled in Batticaloa, who had unwillingly been involved, but are still marginalised by the community to this day. One of the participants expressed that they became aware that the regulations towards Sinhala war widows are unjust – through this, they realised that transitional justice is relevant for everyone, and expressed that they want to see outstanding injustices resolved.

***Participants also gained personal and professional leadership skills, and gained career opportunities.***

During the evaluation research, there were many reported incidents of participants who had gone on to gain opportunities to develop themselves professionally, and also in using personal leadership skills, including to promote transitional justice mechanisms. For example, more than 70% of participants, both boys and girls, have delivered a knowledge session or awareness raising training to their peers on transitional justice. However, more district youth than university youth have delivered such sessions multiple times to varying sized groups, and have more often done this as an individual ‘trainer’ than as a group. Evaluation respondents as a whole believe that individuals have been transformed, in some instances take corrective actions towards transitional justice, and have generally built up relationships with others. Sabaragamuwa students asked for assistance to use the simultaneous translation equipment, and the NPC translator did a free training for them. This enabled the project team to form a good bond with the students. There was a leadership component in this – the students gained personality development, and this helped some gain jobs eventually. Trincomalee, Ampara, and Batticaloa youths, who went through the trainings together, are now in correspondence, and are all friends on Facebook and WhatsApp. One lady participant from Nuwara Eliya, came to Jaffna just to visit the families and understand the reality herself. Stakeholders have that opinion that the NPC project will provide a lot of good employees for the government sector, especially from the universities. There are reports that many of the participants who have since graduated are working in the government sector, and it is believed that they are referring the family members to the relevant organisations. In Jaffna, at least three of the district youth are taking on the subject and becoming career trainers, under the guidance of a district leader.

Almost all of the stakeholder interviewees, who interact with and can observe participants in their education or professional lives, said that they see an improvement in personal or

professional leadership skills, or that some participants had gained career opportunities due to the intervention.

***Participants became resource personnel on transitional justice.***

Becoming a trainer or resource person on transitional justice requires not on skill but commitment to the concept, demonstrating that they are truly internal mediators. This result belongs on impact level, as it is beyond the personal sphere of the participants, and shows that they are influencing other. Three of the champions from Matara have become resource persons for other organisations or trainings, and are very active, having conducted many programs, even one became a resource person for a teacher training school. One district youth from Matara is also engaged as a trainer. In Batticaloa, up to six of the participants are now regularly working as trainers in some areas related to transitional justice. "One of the organizations which got to know that I followed this training and they asked me whether I can do some sessions for the youth. Now I am working as a facilitator for them for youth groups on a part-time basis. Sometimes youth ask some critical questions; however, I am able to answer them properly as I am a political student and the learnings from transitional justice training were quite useful in that aspect," said one champion from the Eastern University. The champions also explained that for most of them, their facilitation skills have improved, and they now have the experience of researching and giving presentations, and have gained communication skills. They feel this will help them in their careers, even if not strictly in a training role.

***There is some indication that participants believe they are more able to resist violence and unsocial behaviour related to ethnic tensions.***

Half of the data sets, from all respondent types, contained assertions that they thought participants were now less vulnerable to becoming involved in conflict. More than 90% of the participant FGDs affirmed this.

A District youth in Matara explained that, "after the Easter attacks, there was a very high tendency to do violence towards Muslims in the area. But this did not happen. We (youth) think that these workshops, as well as other efforts by NGOs and forums and education efforts, have decreased our tendency to be involved. We think that this project can be counted as a contribution towards this." This is reflective of the success in creating a body of mediators. This shows both attitudinal and behavioural change, with the youth very directly referencing their training through the project, affirming result on towards the impact level. Participants also explained that "the violence (Digana and Negombo) area was not where the NPC intervention took place, so we think this shows that the NPC-type trainings have some effect. Also we think that the youth who were involved in that, were brought from outside, and they had not been part of any of this sort of event to teach them awareness." A district youth from Batticaloa further explained what happened in his area, "Batticaloa was affected by the Easter Sunday attack. Some forces, and politicians had some hidden propaganda to create hate between Tamils and Muslims. However, it was not successful and both communities did not get caught in to that trap. Projects like this, and some other humanitarian initiatives by like-minded organization could have a positive impact on this situation." It seems it is having the impact of making the participants think more carefully about dynamics and behaviour: "I changed my social

media behaviour. There were certain racist posts in social media. I wanted to share or re-post it. But I was a little reluctant, because there are some Muslim friends in my Facebook. In one incident, the post was very funny (but it was racist or extremist) and I re-posted it. But then I thought, my friend who is Muslim, might see it. So I deleted it. The training made me think about others' perspectives."

***Participants, particularly district level youth leaders, started engaging in advocacy work as a result of the training.***

More than half of the participant FGDs affirmed that they, or some of their fellow participants, have been engaged in some advocacy work external to the project, on transitional justice.

In the focus group discussions in Batticaloa, project participants described that they are involved in real activism activities. This is reflective of impact, as it is significant behavioural change expanding to others. They are working with other organisations, for example the missing people society, to help affected people approach the relevant department, to collect the quality information from the community, and submit the request or information. They helped to give direction and support to affected mothers. The training was successful in encouraging the participants towards practical action and using knowledge about their own rights. "We were all kids in 2009, at the time of the final stage of war. We lost some of our loved ones and parents at that time due to war and we did not know what to do with those losses. Through this training programme we got to know possible procedures and compensations that we could follow to deal with those losses", said a participant from Batticaloa. The district youth also told the evaluation team that that after the Easter attacks, in Batticaloa, some politicians tried to leverage the situation by doing a stunt to get some benefit, for example by doing a fast or strike. But after the trainings and awareness about transitional justice, the youth understood what was happening, and did not get swayed or affected by this. The youths in that district who had participated in the project, explained during the focus group discussion, that they refused to get involved in the local violence even though they had been incited by local community influencers. The FGD participants who recounted this story explained that they knew of other youth from the area, who had been willing to go along with suggestions to cause harm to property in the area. They were involved with other groups and networks and in previous events, so instead, they organised a blood drive, especially for Muslim youth to donate for affected Catholic communities." Through the evaluation, we saw the strongest evidence of this kind of change in Batticaloa district.

***Youth participated in the follow-up initiatives to deliver the concept to other youth, as per the project design. However, there is no evidence the university participants are choosing to incorporate transitional justice themes into extra-curricular activities in a sustained manner, or organise further activities, without direct support from the project.***

There is a clear difference between the opinion of the university student participants, and the district youth participants, on this topic. Most of the university student participant

FGDs said that they hoped that support would again be provided by NPC, including direct organisation of similar project activities as already conducted, so that the initiative could continue. In contrast, almost all of the district youth FGDs said that they thought follow-up activities could be organised by youth participants in a sustainable manner, without direct support from the project.

Apart from in Wayamba and Peradeniya universities, a selection of student participants became involved in the follow-up events to deliver the concept to other youth. In the districts, on the whole, the participants also shared the concept of transitional justice, as they were involved in other committees and organisations. When discussing whether this would happen again, there was a tendency to speak as if it was up to NPC driving the initiative again, particularly among the university student participants. In some instances, participants mentioned that they would like to continue with the initiative, but they did not have the opportunity to do so. For example, one student participant from Jaffna, explained that she would like to take the concept to her home area, but did not have any platform to do so.

#### **6.1.2 b. What real difference has the activity made to the students and grassroots youth? Was there an effect on their immediate surroundings?**

Evaluation conclusion: **Moderate**

We have taken this question to consider whether there are changes in the environment, for the participants. There are minimal signs which point towards changes in the university academic environment, although there is reported enthusiasm for this. There is some evidence that participants share concepts with friends and family, but face some resistance, and are somewhat reluctant.

The post-graduate studies in the areas of transitional justice (outlined in impact section), the interest of university representatives to build the concept into the curriculum or through non-curriculum learning platforms (such as regular guest lectures or orientation activities), or to bring the concept through their teaching, show the take-up and use of the knowledge by some actors within the university environment.

While there are signs that participants had shared the concept among friends and family, they also mentioned that there was some resistance to talking about it or becoming involved in activities related to the concept. This was true for the majority of districts and universities covered. They explained that their families have experience with previous political regimes where getting involved in discussions about this kind of topic was not encouraged, and they said that their families may worry about negative future consequences. A district participant explained: "There are some people who think that it is a risky thing to deal with such a concept like transitional justice. Some sort of fear or uncertainty is also there." "Even with friends and families, it's not that easy to talk as they feel like this is kind of western concept. Some people are a bit reluctant to accept even that some people were dead, and they are still in the belief that they are missing and not dead" said one of the district counterparts. The university champions group in Batticaloa described, "When you talk about transitional justice in Batticaloa – the community thinks

that it is an out-dated idea and sometimes an anti-government concept. Even the real victims tend to think that there is risk in involving in this concept.”

In addition to the direct beneficiaries, the project has also established tools and communications which reach out to indirect beneficiaries. Several of the youth-led awareness-raising activities, especially at the universities, were designed to reach other students who had not been part of the original training. The student leaders at the University of Colombo who had taken part in the trainings, organised a transitional justice camp and film screening for other university students. The film screening of ‘Tears in Paradise’ organised by the direct beneficiaries at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts led to a discussion with the fellow students on ethnic conflict. The debate competition organised by the student leaders at the University of Jaffna was not only witnessed and assessed by fellow students, it was participated in by debate team members, who were not part of the training organised by NPC but who had gained knowledge about the concepts of transitional justice from the student leaders who had. This demonstrates a sophisticated and sustained level of knowledge dissemination and engagement by indirect beneficiaries. In total, there were more than 5,000 indirect beneficiaries of the intervention at the universities under Outcome 2, and more than 700 indirect beneficiaries who engaged with the concept of transitional justice through district youth leaders under Outcome 3. During the project reflection meeting, indirect beneficiaries also participated. Other students (indirect beneficiaries) who took part in the workshop in the University of Ruhuna, which was facilitated by their peers (the direct beneficiaries) mentioned that it was due to the workshop that they realized that transitional justice is a necessity to prevent another war. At the Sabaragamuwa University, the student-led awareness programmes also reached out to other students, faculty staff and administration. The new degree programme for peace and education is being developed due to the intervention, in order to reach and engage a new cohort of university youth, who were not part of the original intervention.

### **6.1.3 c. To what extent the project contributed to changes at the communal and societal level (beyond participants), and changes to the key drivers of conflict?**

Evaluation conclusion: **Insufficient**

This level of result was not a part of the project design. Accordingly, the project has not been able to influence youth in general, society or government towards transitional justice. The project scope was too small, as it was delivered in 18 months and targeted a small number of youth.

The exact nature of the political context at the end of the evaluation period has changed, and there are projections that it may not be a conducive environment for transitional justice, or youth involvement in this concept. Throughout the project, "We saw very little or minimal media and publicity given from state and private sector both" said the champions at Ruhuna University. A district counterpart also mentioned that there is "very little space to be a force towards policy, practice and credibility, due to narrow awareness among public about the importance of youth involvement in transitional justice."

## 7 Sustainability

This chapter focuses more on structural sustainability of the results of the project in their environment, as the impact chapter has focused more on the sustained behaviour of the project participants and whether they will continue to influence others.

### 7.1.1 a. Do the students and grassroots youth continue to engage in the topic of transitional justice, and if yes, how?

Evaluation conclusion: **Moderate**

We see positive signs that some participants are somewhat continuing to engage in the concept of transitional justice, particularly among district youth conducting advocacy and training. University youth have developed constructive attitudes about transitional justice, and have put this into practice within the project period; however, due to the timeframe, there is little evidence to judge whether they will continue to act as internal mediators, or to continue to proactively to raise awareness amongst others

Especially among district youth, some participants have become engaged as trainers, or have become involved in advocacy work. For many of them, they were already on the pathway of other advocacy work before the NPC intervention, and the major change is that they are able to incorporate the concept of transitional justice in their work, which represents a commitment even in the face of a hostile environment. The networks and platforms for the district youth are well established; however, there were some comments from district youth that it can be difficult to be active: "Lack of physical engagement is quite a challenge. There is less space for youth to engage. One example is youth societies. It was the forum for youth. Now it is inactive. Instead, there are only created bodies, such as project societies. Those are more limited and enclosed." There are reports that some university students who were part of the programme, are now serving as government officers, and in their work are taking care to refer victims to the correct channels.

In contrast to the district youth, the university students generally do not stay in the same network after they graduate. The learning environment and the structures in the university do exist (for example the arts week), but there is a question about whether the students would organise of their own accord without the direct intervention from NPC. "We have no formal structure nor funds to work on transitional justice. However, we have the resources (drama team, knowledge people). If anyone could support we can impart the knowledge to wider community with existing resources."

### 7.1.2 b. What are the major factors which influence the sustainability of the project?

Evaluation conclusion: **Moderate**

The enabling environment for the initiative is ambiguous. There is a possibility it may remain somewhat conducive, with strategic positioning. There are some opportunities for NPC to leverage networks and resources already developed through the project so far. Vice Chancellors who had previously supported access in the university campus for the project can be directly approached. In particular, all the university coordinators interviewed have expressed willingness to support the project continuously, and almost all of them expressed hope that NPC will approach them to conduct more activities. The political willingness towards the concept of transitional justice is currently not clear. There are signs that the enabling environment is less conducive towards the project, than it was at the start of the project. This factor does not change the high relevance or the need for a continued intervention, but may strongly influence the implementation of continued interventions.

NPC has developed some good networks and goodwill in universities. It has been reported that there is support from the universities, to both take up the concept of transitional justice of their own accord, and to support NPC having the activities again. Several stakeholders have given positive comments towards NPC conducting the activities again. It was suggested many times to relabel the initiative and not use the term 'transitional justice', but to rephrase. It was even suggested that since the formal approvals are already in place for the previous activities, there may be no need to go through formal channels and seek approval again, but work on the endorsements so far. This factor is a positive influence on the sustainability of the project.

In addition, NPC has secured some further funding to sustain activities from the project. In particular, some of the existing beneficiaries and youth who began engaging in transitional justice through the project, are able to continue work with funds received through the GIZ project 'Creative Youth Engagement for Pluralism' (C-YEP). In total, NPC has secured more than US \$237,000 for ongoing activities or further phases of the project. Funding mechanisms are supported by GIZ, HELVETAS Sri Lanka through two funds, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung Foundation, Germany.

## 8 Challenges and Lessons Learned

- One key challenge to the project was the timeframe, to complete the activities within 18 months. The project team had to ensure that at least one training and one follow-up event was being done each month. However, especially with the universities, there were restrictions on the timing due to the academic calendar, and strikes.
- Youth who have been exposed to sensitive issues such as having had close family members directly involved in the conflict, or who have experienced fragile contexts, seem to be able to relate to the transitional justice concepts more easily, and be able to engage in critical questions and empathetic engagement more readily.
- Youth who have an academic background in the humanities or social sciences seem more easily to be able to grasp the concepts of transitional justice, and engage in discussion of the social and political implications, more easily.
- Youth who have a more technical educational background may find it more difficult to relate to the transitional justice concepts.
- Follow-up activities were structured, which encouraged actualization of the concept of transitional justice. However, within the project, there was no unstructured space or platform or budget for further activities. Furthermore, there was no active link between university and district youth. A further challenge to the sustainability of the project results was that the supporting fund was for a project of 18 months only, and therefore to sustain or extend the project, NPC needs to secure additional funds through other models. NPC is intending to develop a proposal for a second phase of the project, and secure funding. It is also noteworthy that the coordinating group for Outcome 1 at Jaffna University is planning to seek sponsorship for future participants of the Human Rights Clinic, and has already developed a value proposition for potential supporters.
- Formal support channels within the universities to consolidate endorsement of the activities, was important and a key to the success of the entry into the universities.
- University curricula are limited, and it is a slow process to change.
- The project team was very diverse, had good coordination and communication with coordinators and participants, and was highly committed; this was one of the factors in the project success.
- The selection criteria and methodology of participants and coordinators is a critical factor in success of the trainings and interactions, as well as success of coordination of follow-up activities.
- The flexibility of the project team to adapt the approach and implementation, is a factor for successfully adapting the project to different contexts and reactions.
- Provision of transportation is critical to support access for students and youth who are stationed away from the training or project activity locations.

- Conducting the trainings in well-equipped venues, including residential experiences, are a successful way to ensure long-lasting engagement and development of networks between participants.
- Having a strong purpose and criteria to target an equal number of male and female participants equally through this project was instrumental in ensuring both young women and men benefitted. During the intervention implementation, including trainings and the higher level follow-up events, there was an emphasis on equal selection of boys and girls. In the analysis of the data for the evaluation, there was no noticeably different pattern for male and female respondents in terms of benefit or participation in the programme. For all evaluation questions and findings, there was fairly equal spread of responses between boys and girls. In addition, boys and girls have participated together in mixed groups during the implementation of the project activities, and during the evaluation, both genders seemed comfortable to participate and speak up in mixed groups.

## 9 Recommendations

- When starting to engage with youth participants, describe the consultation process that fed into the initiative design. This may reassure youth who were not personally involved in the consultation stage. This way, the participants will understand the origins of the project that they are supposed to take part in, and may have less of an initial hesitance to participating.
- Since the project timeframe and scope was small, it was somewhat considered a 'pilot project', and the team has now a strong understanding of the impact it has in the various locations and universities. NPC could consider to continue with an intervention with less regional spread, and more in-depth work in each location. Depending on the project timeframe, the number and level of engagement in each university and district may be adjusted; for example by reducing the number of project sites but increasing the length and type of engagement. While the short timeframe was dealt with well so far, the project may be able to produce more or deeper results if funding or timeframe were increased, by allowing increased engagement with each target group.
- While the mechanism of the UNPBF funding was designed to create the initial engagement, and looked for novel approaches, we recommend that changes created by the project should be leveraged further by continued funding. NPC may consider seeking alternate funding sources which provide longer-term support.
- NPC will need to make careful consideration of dynamics and the political landscape before formulating new intervention strategies. However, even if transitional justice is not a country priority, there may be ways to work effectively, such as use of already established networks and goodwill to ensure continued access to university environments, for example.
- If working with an implementing partner, stay closely informed about the project progress. For example, in Outcome 1, the implementing team faced some delays, not in implementing their activities, but in being dependent on various university authorities for approvals. By being more closely informed about project progress, implementation teams may be able to support each intervention, share resources and networks, and collaborate, if an opportunity arises.
- Develop a plan to engage the participants who have already been part of the project, including utilising youth who have training capacity. For example, strong trainers could be engaged as resource personnel during subsequent phases of the project.
- Even if outcome level indicators are not formally part of the results framework, and it is not expected to achieve a high level of intermediate outcome or impact level results, the project can use alternative methods, such as progress markers, to monitor directionality of change, and learn how youth engage in transitional justice beyond the project activities.
- Produce activity modules, concepts or guidelines as a means of ensuring the consistency of the content and of ensuring the quality of the delivery. Based on

the modules, conduct a common discussion or training for trainers, to ensure content is consistent or at least complementary across all trainings. Or, allow the trainers to develop their own modules according to their areas of expertise and designated part in the training, and conduct a meeting to allow them to understand the flow, and share dialogue to encourage better consistency.

- Consider the reframing or a change in labelling from ‘transitional justice’. The most frequently suggested alternative mentioned by stakeholders is ‘peacebuilding’.
- A future project should provide a guideline or a toolkit, and some ToT initiatives, for the youth who showed a keen interest and who have a high potential to be engaged as trainers. This would ensure they have good quality materials to work with even if they are working beyond the project, and will disseminate the concepts of transitional justice further.
- University coordinators play an important role; continue to gain endorsement from Vice Chancellors, and encourage selection based on legitimacy with the topic as well as good rapport with students.
- Since participant selection and profile are important factors for success of the trainings and follow-up activities, we recommend to continue using criteria and providing guidelines for the coordinators in selection of the participants, including background, diversity, and academic background. Furthermore, if the project is able to more deeply engage in a smaller pool or project sites or universities, there may be more opportunity for the project team to tailor the approach and implementation strategy according to participant group profile. This may enable NPC to engage groups, for example with non-humanities backgrounds, more effectively than the project thus far.
- Depending on timeframe of subsequent interventions, NPC will need to consider whether change in university curricula is a viable objective. It may be worthwhile to consider alternatives, such as integration of teaching tools and themes, or non-curricula learning spaces such as guest lectures on transitional justice topics. University representatives have already indicated that there is motivation towards such initiatives.
- Since the project seemed to benefit both boys and girls well due to the emphasis on equal participation in project activities, it would be valuable to adopt this approach again in subsequent phases of the project

DATA COLLECTION – SCHEDULE AND COVERAGE

**Focused Group Discussions - Conducted**

	LOCATION	DATE	TARGET GROUP	NO OF PARTICIPANTS			REMARKS
				M	F	T	
1	University of Jafna	11 January 2020	Female -Training Participants/ Champions – Jaffna University	0	8	8	
			Male -Training Participants/ Champions – Jaffna University	15	0	15	
2	SOND Office 0 Jaffna	12 January 2020	Training Participants/ Champions – Jaffna District	1	4	5	
3	CES Office - Nuwara Eliya.	21 January 2020	Female - Training Participants – Nuwara Eliya District	0	5	5	
4			Female - Training Participants – Nuwara Eliya District	4	0	4	
5			Champions – Nuwara Eliya District	3	4	7	
6	Sabaragamuwa University	22 January 2020	Mix - Training Participants – Sabaragamuwa University	2	2	4	
7			Mix – Champions, Sabaragamuwa University	1	6	7	
8	Batticaloa District	23 January 2020	Female - Training Participants – Batticaloa District	0	4	4	
9			Mix - Training Participants – Batticaloa District	4	4	8	
10			Mix - Champions – Batticaloa District	2	2	4	
11	Eastern University	24 January 2020	Mix – Training Participants, Eastern University	9	9	18	Comprised 4 Asst. Lecturers, 1 outsider
12			Mix – Champions, Eastern University	3	5	8	
13	University of Ruhuna	28 January 2020	Mix - Participants of Follow-up Event	4	12	16	Some joined later

14			Mix - Champions	4	12	16	Some joined later
15	CDC - Matara	29 January 2020	Male - Participants of Follow-up Event	3	0	3	
16			Male - Participants of Follow-up Event	4	0	4	No active females
TOTAL				59	77	136	

### Interviews Conducted

	LOCATION	DATE	NAME	CATEGORY/ POSITION	REMARKS
1	SCRM Office - Colombo	07 January 2020	Mr Sanjeewa Wimalagunaratna	Director, SCRM	
2	University of Jaffna	11 January 2020	Dr. Ainkaran	University Coordinator	
3			Ms. Kosalai	Senior Lecturer, Law Faculty	Contact point for Outcome 01
4	SOND Office, Jaffna	12 January 2020	Mr Senthoo Raja,	District Counterpart, Director SOND in Jaffna	
5	Nugegoda (IMS Office)	13 January 2020	Mr. Jagath Liyanaarachchi	Trainer	
6	University of Colombo	13 January 2020	Mr. Hakeem	Trainer/ University Coordinator - Centre for the Study of Human Rights Faculty of Law, University of Colombo	
7	CES Office - Nuwara Eliya.	21 January 2020	Mr. Murugan	District Counterpart. President - CES	
8	Sabaragamuwa University	22 January 2020	Mr. R.C. Palliyaguruge	University Coordinator, Senior Lecturer	
9	Batticaloa District	23 January 2020	Mr. Manoharan	Director – Human Rights Civil Committee	
10	Eastern University	24 January 2020	Mr. Yogarajah	University Coordinator, Senior Lecturer – Political Science	
11	Online	24 January	Ms. Jessica Stober	Legal Action Worldwide	Whatsapp

	Interview	2020		(LAW)	interview
12	University of Ruhuna	28 January 2020	Mr. I.R. Priyantha	University Coordinator, Senior Lecturer – Department of Public Policies	
13	CDC - Matara	29 January 2020	Mr. Munsif	Government Officer (Development Officer)- Matara District Secretariat	
14			Mr. W. Wellala	District Counterpart, Chairperson – CDC	
15	Colombo	29 January 2020	Ms. Dushanthi Fernarndo	Funder, Desk Officer, UNPBF	

Case studies collected during the Final Project Evaluation of “Youth Engagement in Transitional Justice for Long-Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka.”

### **S. Farvin (Jaffna University)**

Now I am the in last year. When I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, in early 2018, the training was conducted. At that time, I was boarding outside the university. In that boarding place, there were 10 students with me. When I was participating in the first day of the training, in the morning, I had no idea what the training would be about. I also felt nervous about what would happen. But I totally participated for 2 days. Both myself and my friend (Mona) also participated. After the first day program, my colleagues at the boarding house were asking about the training. At the end of that first day, I was unable to explain it. But after the two days, I really got a solid idea about what transitional justice is, what the 4 pillars are, why we need transitional justice. I got to know the main responsibilities of the government, and why the government should implement this. As a Muslim, I was not directly affected by the war, but now I understand the importance of the concept. After the two days’ program, when I returned to the boarding house, I shared my experience about why this concept is important, and if we implement the right methodology, how we also get a benefit from that as a country. After sharing with my colleagues, they also shared with their parents when they went home for the vacation. They came back to the boarding house with the feedback from the parents also. I think that the training process should continue, especially for the students who have not participated yet. The students who are already trained, need to take up some opportunity to share this experience in our home places. I am living in Negombo. There should be a network so we can know where we can share this knowledge in our home towns.

### **Madishalini (Jaffna University)**

Madishalini is a 4<sup>th</sup> year student in the Drama and Arts program. She is from Vavuniya. She was not directly affected by the war, but has seen how this has affected other families in her area. She participated in the training when she was in 3<sup>rd</sup> year. In the Drama and Arts program, there is a subject called Communication Theatre. Madishalini missed that unit, and for a punishment, the lecturer instructed her to present a session on transitional justice. The presentation was instructed to be very brief, only 5 minutes. Therefore, she organised some of the content from the transitional justice training, and did a PowerPoint presentation. The lecturer got interested, and then requested her to do a detailed session, for about an hour. The lecturer said that if she does the session, it can also help the other communication students. Then, Madishalini developed a bigger session plan. She included information about what transitional justice is, the 4 pillars, and presented the activities which are being conducted already by the government. She then facilitated a brainstorm with the question “As students, what can we do in the future, to help bring justice?” About 10-12 students were in the audience, and none of them had participated in the training. Madishalini told us that by conducting the presentation according to her lecturer’s request, it was like a refresher, and helped her to internalize the concept again. Since the training, she understands what the solutions might be to bring justice for the affected families.

### **Dilousi Moses (Jaffna University)**

Dilousi is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student in the Law Faculty. She believes that this program is important because transitional justice process needs a long timeframe, in order to achieve a benefit for affected families. In the other countries she learned about, where war has happened, it took a long time to make things right and to replenish resources. She explains, "In Sri Lanka, this process was started under Maithripala's time, and it will take a long time to mobilise and compensate for all the losses for the war-affected persons. In recent years, many youth were trained by non-government organisations like NPC. The government supported these trainings, and gave the permissions. The youth who participated in this training will be able to use the skills and the knowledge in the future. They can use it when they become politically active, or through any work opportunities in the government or even in the private sector. They can use this knowledge in their position to work towards justice for the affected families. If the students, when they pass out, get decision-making positions, they can also influence to make things right for the affected communities." As a law student, Dilousi could understand how transitional justice is related to the various sections of the law in the country (both international and national law). She would like to work for the community. That is a reason why she is taking transitional justice as a subject in the university. Through the training, she got to know what are the rules and regulations related to compensating for the resources and losses. She can see that there are very bad consequences from the war. To reduce these effects, the government should support the transitional justice process, to bring justice for the affected community. Because of the war, still believes that Sri Lanka is remaining as a 3<sup>rd</sup> world, developing country. Because the correct processes have not been followed to recover properly from the war, there is still dependence on external assistance. She is adamant that the youth who participated in the training will not become involved in any conflict. She and her peers are educated about transitional justice, and they will support for further academic development of this subject. They do not expect that another war will take place, as long as the situation in the country will be maintained well, and the resources are provided for the affected people. It is a good lesson for the youth; not to be involved in conflict activities, and not to put the country in a difficult situation. To prevent conflict situations in the future, she believes that transitional justice concept is very relevant to the youth.

### **M. F. Famiz (University of Jaffna)**

He is a science student at the University of Jaffna, but his home place is in Mannar. First of all, he would like to give thanks for all the people who organized the training, as well as the resource people, and the donor organization who supported this process. At the university, Muslim, Sinhala and Tamil students all participated. He says that through the training, the participants reflected on their own problems, and understood the problems faced by others. One of the main realizations was that in order to achieve sustainable development and peace, transitional justice a requirement. He says that although his peers already participated in short courses on transitional justice, those courses were only 3 or four hours, and that time duration was not enough. The two-day training through NPC really gave the students an idea of transitional justice. Because of that, he is also now working as a resource person. For example in Vilthu, an organisation working for women, he has conducted a couple of trainings on transitional justice. The NPC training was conducted in both languages, and the handouts some were in English, so the real learning was accessible in the training, with real equity. Because of this two day training with the real

knowledge, it gave Famiz and his peers the confidence and skills to conduct the awareness raisings for other organizations. He is now working as a trainer to impart the knowledge in Jaffna district.

### **Kugaswaran (University of Jaffna)**

He is from Kilinochchi, and he purposefully came all the way from Kilinochchi for this discussion. He is 4<sup>th</sup> year in the arts faculty. Before participating in this training, he did not know anything related to transitional justice. This was the first time he heard these words. When he came to the university, he saw that there are Muslim and Sinhala students also studying in the university. He had not experienced any link or connection with these communities back in his home town. When he saw these people, he used to get agitated with them. He thought that they have really created a problem for his community, and then he felt like he was getting forced to study with them. So, all the time he was keeping his distance. Because of this transitional justice training, he understood the real situation, including the causes of the war, and the effects of the war. Now he realizes that the public masses were not the cause. It was structural violence, and the government and the LTTE created a big problem. Because of the war, there was a misunderstanding among all ethnicities, in the whole nation. He now reflects that society has been living with this thinking since then. When they had this training, the Sinhala and Muslim community students also shared their grievances and thoughts. When they shared their experience, Kugaswaran got to understand that the innocent people are not the cause, and he wondered why his groups was keeping the distance from them. Since then, he and his peers have tried to connect and communicate with others inside the university. After he came to know the transitional justice process, he thinks this is really the solution for the affected persons. After that, he has been motivating the families close to him, to advocate for their resources and to lobby to find solutions. Transitional justice is being implemented by the government too slowly, but he believes it will be achieved one day, just like the other international countries he learned about in the training. He thinks that there is development and justice; these are two different concepts. One day, justice will be realized. Just as he changed his attitude and behavior towards Sinhala and Muslim communities, the others should also be provided with a forum to understand the problems that the Tamil communities are facing. He expects that the training should be replicated throughout the southern regions, in the universities and for the public, to create more awareness.

### **Anulakshan**

Anulakshan is studying chemistry in the science department, and he is in the 4<sup>th</sup> year. He gained a good knowledge about transitional justice within the two-day training. He got to know all the pillars and methodologies, and all the government tools which are being implemented to recover all losses for the communities. He reports that NPC supported the student participants to develop their own initiative to impart their knowledge to a wider group of youth. Using this opportunity, Anulakshan and his peers organized a debate competition within the university for the arts week. The Arts Faculty is majority Tamil speaking. He explains that they informed all the arts faculty about the debate. He reports that Dr Ainkaran also supported the effort. They managed to get all the arts students together in one place, and conducted the debate. The people studying in other faculties also participated. More than 1,500 students saw the debate, and so they also learned about transitional justice, and what happened in the war. Learning from the first debate experience, the students also organized a Sinhala debate in the science faculty, in the

chemistry department. Sinhala students who did not get the opportunity to participate in the training therefore got to witness the debate, and so they also know a lot about the transitional justice process in Sri Lanka.

### **Chithika (Jaffna)**

Chithika is working for the media. She has participated for all 3 days in the training. Because of the training, she got to know all about transitional justice, and how it can be used to benefit people. She understands now the importance of putting the information on the public masses. Chithika gained a lot of knowledge because of the selected youth were from Jaffna, Killinochchi, and Mullaitivu, and were a mixture of affected and unaffected youth. Accordingly, the affected have shared their experience. Because of this, they were able to understand the concepts very easily. She has implemented a training for 45 other youth, and was working as a volunteer for the youth group. The sessions conducted in the training supported her to share stories which were relevant for the youth, in her own trainings. She explained that in the trainings, the youths also participated to share their experience, and that they had totally lost their parents. Those stories were the most impactful, and sparked her to want to get more engaged with transitional justice. She conducted a very basic level discussion among youth, and she also likes to do more awareness programs among the youth, but there was no support for the youth to implement this type of training. Alone, as one person, it is difficult to impart the knowledge to a big community or group. She believes should be a group effort. However, there was no system to organize them into groups. As a one-shot event, the training is done. But after a couple of months, she feels that there was no empowerment process for this. Alone, youth can not make a difference. Some support is needed.

### **Senthran (Jaffna)**

He is a passed out graduate from the university, and is running his own organisation in Jaffna. He has developed a document with the training videos from the north and east, about the affected families. He has collected the data, and linked it with the transitional justice process, to demonstrate how this process can help them. He is used to meeting the affected families. When he meets them, he informs about the different ways to recover the losses. This training helped him how to explain the processes. He also refers the relevant families to the relevant departments to lodge their information. There was a discussion with the UN representatives who came to observe the transitional justice process in Sri Lanka. He got an opportunity to present his data, and the non-governmental people were also in attendance. After the training through SONDA, the youth who were members of civil societies then conducted five trainings on transitional justice. Each program had 25 civil society organizational representatives. He had the opportunity to take part in the discussion about the process happening in Sri Lanka. He was able to describe the current situation and process, within that international conference. The quality of the program was using a proper methodology, with case studies and story-telling processes. Because of that, the other youth participants were able to really understand the different areas. The trainers were also very young, around their age. The resource persons were very good and sensitive. The program has been implemented in both languages. Thushi and other project officers could speak all 3 languages. The system has motivated the youth group to also learn languages, to better communicate with other communities. In the training, he thought to develop the skills on transitional justice related to human rights, and that

he wants to do work to train others, and conduct research, in order to update his knowledge. The training really included the participatory methods. This also encouraged the participants to use similar methods. Through the training, they got information regarding the Office for Missing Persons, and RTI, and the four pillars of transitional justice, and the process which has been used by the government so far to compensate the losses to the community. Now, he is a very capable person to implement the transitional justice training for any target group. Mr Sentooraja is supporting them.

### **S. Kamaleshani (Nuwara Eliya)**

Kamaleshani was born in the upcountry. She explained that she did not bother or have any serious idea of other people who living in the country. She always thought about her own community. She explains, "Our speaking as Tamil, it is different from the north and east. Always, I had the idea that our speaking method was not recognized by the north and east people. Always, they think that upcountry people are like second-origin, or people who came as laborers from India. I'm thinking, those who are not respecting our community, should not be respected. Luckily, I was selected for the transitional justice training through the cultural & environment organization. When I participated in the training, I learnt the new concept of transitional justice. The trainers who conducted the training, mainly Thusy and the team, provided us the opportunity share the experience of affected families. Also, they have prepared a documentary film of the north and east people affected the war more for more than 30 years. Through this sharing and observing the films, I thought of how much the north and east people are affected by the war, including youth and children, as well as adults. At the same time, I got more insights regarding their loses, physical and human. The, only I realized the impact of the war.

This was a good opportunity to re think my own perceptions and ideas regarding the north and east people. Through this training I came to know overall impact of the war as well as some of the sensitive issues reading women and children. Not only did they lose their resources and lives, there was no time to think about their life as well. So, to get something for their children and for their family members, some of their women had to commit their total body for earning. And violations against women and children were done not only by the army forces as well as the LTTE. After came to know all these situations, my wrong perceptions on north and east people were totally changed. I got empathy for north and east people. Anyway, we are as youths realized the effects of war, and how this contributes to the under developed situation in the country. In the future, as the youth, we have to work for justice. This is the learning I got from the training. Thank you very much."

### **Sewwandi Uthpala and Miss Shanikala (Nuwara Eliya)**

First, the CES selected youth from Nuwara-Eliya participated in the transitional justice training in Kandy. After that, they did a one-day awareness training for us. We were from the DIRC and we got this knowledge and experience through that one-day training, and then we also followed up with a few other awareness trainings for further people. After the training we did one awareness training for about 10 youths selected from Hawa-Eliya (Nuwara-Eliya district). The purpose was to give the knowledge received during the awareness done by Nesharaj and team, in the training. So this was to share the importance and value of peace and co-existence in communities, for the long run, in society. After a few of these

gatherings, we also have new friends and know the value of unity and know how to respect each other and our respective religions, culture and community practices as well. At any time when there is work, awareness raising or follow-up events, we get information from Mr Murugan, and we are ready to participate.

### **Miss Dinushi (Sabaragamuwa University)**

“After the transitional justice workshop, I wrote a drama script to produce a drama. The story was between two families, and their behaviour leading them to fight each other. It escalated it to the Grama Niladhari and the Police as well. One family is throwing their garbage to the other family’s compound/garden. Then the victims always verbally accuse due to their unhappiness, and leads to fighting, and head of the household died. It finally outlined settlement from legal actions favoring the powerful family (accused family), but in fact they were guilty in reality.

In this story we wanted to show that the powerful party tries to impose their power and all other capacities to suppress the victims. In scenarios like this, the suppressed party sometimes has no choice than get involved in fighting and violations in a larger level, which may be very disastrous. People talk more and criticize those actions, but never look into the root causes of the issues.

We wanted to show through the drama how the issues or problems from the conflict situation in Sri Lanka were not properly addressed by the government and legal system, leading them to more fighting. With the government power and neglecting the minorities, the legislation and judiciary did not act justly for all equally.

Even after a decade we do not see the justice happening for direct victims and others in a reasonable manner. Also the level of understanding of transitional justice and the framework we experienced, is different from place to place. For example, we know that the cooperation level within our university and in Ruhuna University will be different. We did not see such a big difference between ethnicities of the students. But in Jaffna University we saw the treatment was different for Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslims students, by all. We should consider all of us are the same as human being, and not to have segregate boarders for ethnicity, religion, etc. We see the war was finished but the issues created from the war have not ended, and mindsets have to change. Justice, mutual understanding, respect, and diversity have to be the foundations for co-existence. In addition, there should be more exchange visits between people to understand each other and follow-up with sharing real facts and facilitating co-existence session, to bring the transitional justice to all.

### **Mr. Prasanna Lakmal (Sabaragamuwa University)**

In this transitional justice workshop, and the few events we did inside our universities, we saw how people got knowledge and tended to think at different levels. Some people understood well, and some people did not, but at least they heard of the concepts. My opinion is the project target beneficiaries should have been from a much wider coverage. In the university, it’s a small group of students, lecturers and other staff. Thus the message is spread limited here and its effects would also be limited.

The project should have some components planned to deliver the concepts, methodologies, tools and experience-sharing mechanism to a wider coverage of the community. This could have been done with university students and lecturers as the pioneers or leading people to general society. Then it has some more effects, and long-term results, for which we can say we did some substantial work.

At least, as we are in a middle of village area, if we could do some work with village communities and engage with them, that will last over time and it will further enhance the perceptions and experience of the general public towards this kind of work.

**Mr. Dushan Amith (Sabaragamuwa University)**

As a student who sees the requirement of the continuity of this kind of initiative, I would like to propose a few things here. For a wider coverage in society, and empowerment towards transitional justice concepts and its applications, the project needs more involvement from many parties. In our university we had about 400 students, and only 45 were selected for this. This is just a 1% representation, from which we cannot generalize a majority opinion.

Therefore, our focus has to be including more beneficiaries to understand its importance, and the validity for justice and co-existence for long lasting peace and a better Sri Lanka tomorrow. So, in going forward, the targets this project implementation so far, are not enough. This project has to focus more on the grassroots level, and from there we can go on a long journey. This could start from the GN area level, the DS level in the administrative system, and with formal education systems, and also with school awareness building to enhance the results. This is because the future generation is belonging to the present children, and if they are knowledgeable and understanding, embracing diversity in culture, and respecting each other, it will be a very good foundation for future. But I know this is very challenging, as it's not like a university as a small entity.

**Ms. Ann Shehani (Sabaragamuwa University)**

In my opinion, a total inter-relationship would make these efforts more successful in the future. From childhood, everyone should be given a Sri Lankan identity, rather than an ethnic identity. At the school level, teachers, parents, religious leadership and all who are intervening in the education system are important actors. Mutual understanding and respect for diversity and multicultural society should be promoted. The southern people should understand the problems of northern people, and north people should understand the south people. People would think that justice is not particular only for one community, but common for all public. This level of understanding should come through much more in relationships, through travel, talking to each other and living together, exchange visits, and from time to time celebrations of all festivals in both communities.

We as Sinhalese see only our problems and the things preferred by us. It's the same for Tamils and Muslims, who see the problems from their point of view, and not with the same feeling like us. So we say it's your problem, they say no, it's because of your problem.

This just because we do not properly understand each other's culture, religion, language and customs. If we do understand these properly, and the value of each component to every community, people would

have respect and understanding for diversity. This will help to identify the political behaviors and social issues from a common perspective, and it will further help to establish peace. Through these efforts, I believe the space for conflicts will reduce, and peace will be a realistic dream for the future generation.

### **P. Bhanuja (Eastern University)**

I got this training when I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. I got the chance because of the absence of nominated senior students. The training was conducted in a participatory manner using interactive tools. I am from Akkaraipattu, where a marginalized community is living. Most of the community members are fishermen and farmers. Also, my area was severely impacted by the war.

One of the organizations got to know that I got this training, and they asked me whether I can do some sessions for the youth. Now I am working as a facilitator for them, for the youth groups on part-time basis. Sometimes, youth ask some critical questions regarding the rules and regulations of the government, and the constitution. I am able to answer them properly, as I am a political student, and the learnings from the transitional justice training were quite useful in my work.

According to the target group and their expectation, I customize the methodology to impart the knowledge. I do not use any theory jargons, and I always try to use simple explanations for the theory. In the training which I participated, trainers used different games which made me to remember the concepts easily. So I use the same games and activities in my sessions too.

After the training, I tried to find more details, and I researched documents from the internet and other related organizations. This also improved my knowledge, based on the initial foundation gained at the training.

Before the Easter attacks, there were no issues in my trainings. But after the attacks, there were a lot of critical and unwanted questions. However, I think I managed to give good answers based on my academic knowledge and experience.

As I am living in Ampara, there are Muslims and Tamils. Therefore it is quite important to create ethnic harmony within the communities.

Because of this I did not finalize the theme of my final year thesis. I am thinking of putting "Current Social Conflicts in Sri Lanka" as my topic.

### **Prasath (University of Ruhuna)**

Prasath is an undergraduate of Science faculty of University of Ruhuna, and he is a classic example to justify the theory of change of the project which argues that transformation of youth towards positive engagement in transitional justice is possible once they are given the opportunity to raise their genuine concerns on transitional justice, and once they are being heard and addressed after providing theoretical knowledge on the concepts.

It was an accident for Prasath to participate in the champions training. "My friend Piyumal asked me to participate for a training representing the university and I did not know anything about NPC or transitional

justice, and I just participated there. The concepts were very new to me, as I am from the science faculty,” said Prasath.

However, according to Prasath, the training flow helped him to understand the background and the core of the concepts. “We found the flow of the training was really effective. Even though we knew very little on exact concepts, most of us had many offensive ideas on transitional justice. We knew only about the deaths of army soldiers, and we felt that after the war everything was settled. But with the flow it was like an eye-opener for us to think on the other side of the story” he added.

During the training, Prasath along with his friends continuously challenged the resource person, raising their genuine concerns. Prasath believes that a key driver for his internal change was that opportunity to raise all his concerns “To be honest, I had genuine concerns against TJ and I asked questions in the programme, I got reasonable answers theoretically, then I started to believe those concepts. Those were automatically incorporated in things that I do.”

“I am a member and a coordinator of a voluntary student union at the science faculty called SCALP. We do different leadership trainings to rural schools and rural youth, by our own initiative. When designing certain leadership trainings, I used the learned concepts in my design, such as creating win-win solutions. Later I felt that peace & reconciliation became a main cross-cutting theme of our training. Now we are getting more requests from Catholic, Tamil schools for our programmes and this thematic change would be a reason for it,” Prasath explained. In addition, Prasath volunteered to become a resource person for the follow-up event conducted by the champions of Matara District. Explaining his experience in designing the follow-up event, he said “During the planning discussions, we realized that there are different types of learners, Learners by listening, Learners by challenging. We discussed that we do not need to worry about listening learners as they would anyway learn, and we focused on creating opportunity for those who wish to challenge it, as we had during our training. Furthermore, we had the confidence that we could control those arguments as a team, as we are also youth”.

Prasath is very much positive on transitional justice as a potential tool for long-lasting peace in Sri Lanka, as well as the approach taken by the project. “Generally, we are not used to talking about justice for both parties; we always tend to think only on our benefit. We think win-lose, instead of win-win. However, through the training with arguments, we realized this and changed our perceptions. I believe that the way to practical implementation of transitional justice is this personal transformation. Once you realize there is a need for transitional justice, you will automatically work for it”.

### **Shenal (Matara)**

Shenal is an Engineering undergraduate studying in University of Moratuwa. He was nominated to the champions training through a personal connection to the chairperson of the CDC, the district counterpart. Shenal’s story reflects the realistic change of an educated youth in his behavior within personal surroundings.

Shenal was new to the trainees group from Matara; however, he moved well with the participants during the 2-day champions training. According to Shenal, the training flow was conducive and motivated him to actively move with others and participate in the training. Shenal is a rational thinker and he too engaged with some tense discussions with the resource persons, based on by rational analysis. “Initial concepts

were ok, those were really new to us. We understood the real depth of the concept and a mind was set. However, during the second day evening session, which was to describe the involvement of government in the transitional justice process, we felt that there are discrepancies in that presentation and especially certain percentages and values he presented. Then I calculated those and found it was not correct. Then we questioned on those, and it was proven that those figures were not correct” he explained remembering his experience at training. “It was a heated discussion, the resource person may have felt guilty, but it was our genuine concern. The lesson for us for the follow up activity was the importance of better preparation, and not to put ourselves in trouble as resource persons” added others.

Due to intense academic schedules of the university, Shenal did not have the opportunity to take part in the follow-up event as a resource person. However, he explained how his own feelings were changed and how he had differently engaged with his own peers during different situations after the training. “Same as many others, my genuine perception was more against transitional justice, and it got changed during the training. As an example, I was very much against different celebrations and commemorations of LTTE before the training. Even today, I personally do not agree the celebration of a banned terrorist organization like LTTE. But, with the experience of the training, I came to accept that there is a right for families of war victims to celebrate their loved members, and know what has happened to them”

Further explaining how he used these learning he added “in my university, some posts were shared by Tamil students on Prabhakaran’s Birthday, and there were some intense discussions among Sinhalese students against it. With my own realizations from the training, I tried discussing with them that families of combatants of LTTE should have the right to commemorate their loved ones who died during the war”

Shenal is optimistic on the validity of transitional justice. However, he is critical about how the concept is brought to society. “Even though there is an objection within the community on transitional justice, it should be taken positively, and we should try to enlighten people rather than trying to suppress them using political power. I didn’t see any involvement through any media, to explain the reality behind the concept. Therefore, it had led to an objection against the word of transitional justice, may be not the real concept”. Proposing a different approach, he added “Now, there is this anti-TJ mentality as it is felt that this could betray our war heroes. If we can do a campaign to show the reality and convince society that it is an approach which could go beyond honoring our war heroes, we could get positive community participation towards the concept.”

### **Piyumal (Open University of Sri Lanka)**

Piyumal is a youth activist following the Degree of Bachelor of laws (LLB) in the Open University of Sri Lanka. He has his own background, which had motivated him to be engaged in social work and specifically in concepts like TJ. “My ancestors (3<sup>rd</sup> generation) were from South India. They came to Sri Lanka as tea pluckers and they were at the lowest level of the social hierarchy and had to face various discriminations. However, my grandfather had thought about his future generations and changed his surname. He wanted us to get educated and get due respect from the society, and therefore he changed his surname. My grandfather had thought on our future. So I feel that I also need to do something good for the next generation”. Further adding his family’s experience related to the war, he said, “My brother was in Navy. Once, their ship was attacked by LTTE and my brother was missing. We were waiting for news about him. Only after few days, we got to know that he was alive. I remember that phone call and during the call, the

particular officer who answered our call to my brother, and he ran in to the phone making my mother cry. She became vegetarian from that day. It was a sensitive experience, and with this I strongly believe that we do not need a war again in this country”.

Piyumal was closely working with the Community Development Centre (CDC), the District partner for the project in Matara and therefore nominated for the champions training. “Most of the participants from Matara were my friends, and we usually have a habit of challenging resource persons with our concerns rather than passive learning. So we asked questions and challenged the resource persons during the training, and at times we put them in trouble”. Piyumal believes that this active participation made them better grasp the concept, and later use the ideas for his own career advancement.

After the training, Piyumal provided leadership to conduct the follow-up activity in Matara district. “There were 8 of us and we formed 4 teams of 2 and distributed 4 pillars of TJ among us, and agreed to search more on each pillar and prepare for follow-up training” he explained their strategy for follow-up training preparation. His leadership role was endorsed by the district counterpart, Mr. Wellala, the chairperson of CDC. “I observed Piyumal was encouraging and helping others to do their sessions in the follow-up training. They had a few preparatory discussions”. Piyumal believes that their effort was successful in the follow-up event “I received a call from NPC representative after 1 day of our follow-up programme, and he said that our programme was the best out of all programmes he had visited” he added.

According to Piyumal, the most significant benefit he gained from the training is the personal transformation of his thinking pattern. However, he appreciated many other tangible benefits he gained to his career through this training “I was selected as the coordinator for ONUR coordinated ‘Heal the past Build the Future Project’ due to this programme. There was a workshop conducted by ONUR and some other organizations. I participated in that workshop, and used the concepts learned during the NPC TJ training during the entire workshop. Once I returned, I was nominated by ONUR as the coordinator of their programme, even without an interview. Also, I was involved with SCALP and the interfaith forum, and some other workshops organized by CDC and other organizations as a resource person on transitional justice.”

Piyumal is still critical about the exact impact of the project. Raising his concern about the real impact of similar initiatives, he added “Ok, NGOs come up with different projects, they do activities, and take some photos, and go. Sometimes, they ask our opinion whether it is good or bad, and what exactly we are doing now. But how can we measure the real social outcome and impact of a particular programme? You better measure that, even though it is challenging”.

Piyumal is determined to contribute his best to similar efforts. However, he is concerned about the lack of physical space for youth to interact, apart from mutual spaces like social media, and he is also concerned about the credibility of development programmes and some organizations to deliver genuine results, as well as the perceived negative support of the new government on transitional justice and other peace-related concepts. He argues, “Now NGOs have been taken under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense. If NGOs are smart enough, should have use this positively to promote concepts like transitional justice. The current government came into power highlighting the importance of national security. The key base for national security is reconciliation. We can convince the Defense ministry, to promote these concepts more effectively.”