

annual report



The Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust
Annual Report 2007-2008



Our message

“...the work of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust has reflected the core values to which we subscribe: the promotion of peace, justice, reconciliation and the protection of human rights...”

This year has been one of considerable upheaval and turmoil in Sri Lanka. With the abandonment of the ceasefire agreement in January 2008 and the rapid escalation of the armed conflict, the lives of the civilian population were once again thrown into jeopardy. As the humanitarian situation worsened, the country continued to witness extrajudicial killings, disappearances and large-scale displacement.

In this context, the work of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust has reflected the core values to which we subscribe: the promotion of peace, justice, reconciliation and the protection of human rights. Over the last year we have been able to support the efforts of our partners by distributing grants of more than Rs. 21.5 million (over US \$200,000), an increase of some 66% compared to 2006/07. In addition, we have redesigned our grant-making systems to strengthen transparency and accountability and made our first attempts at core funding. In line with our commitment to build the capacity of our partners we were also able to conduct training programmes on financial management and fundraising.

Our association with the Foundations for Peace network has been strengthened over the last year. Supported by the European Union Special Programme on Reconciliation, the network has developed the Victim/Survivor Empowerment and Peace-building project. This initiative works to document and share best practice amongst grant-makers to enable them to better support and empower those affected by conflict.

None of this could have been possible without the generous support of our donors, particularly the Ford Foundation in India, the German Development Agency's project, Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation, and Voluntary Service Overseas. In collaboration with them we have continued to support a growing number of partner organisations and relocate and furnish new premises. The work of the Trust is also dependent on its dedicated and passionate Board and staff, who together have helped the organisation expand its reach ever further.

With the prospect of escalating conflict ahead, 2008/9 will no doubt present further challenges for the work of the Trust. As we prepare to engage in a new strategic planning process, we look forward to working with our stakeholders to meet these challenges in the years to come.



Sithie Tiruchelvam, Chairperson



Sheila Richards, Executive Director



Programmes

The Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust honours the memory and legacy of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam by providing support to partner organisations working towards peace, reconciliation and human rights.

Sri Lanka's human rights crisis continues, with the regular and widespread violation of rights across the country. Against this backdrop, the Trust has concentrated its grant-making on organisations that provide legal representation and psychosocial support to survivors of gross human rights violations. In addition, the Trust has supported the human rights training and awareness raising initiatives of its partners.

With the return to full-scale conflict, the importance of continued dialogue between communities has once again taken on significant importance in addressing issues of peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Through its grant-making, the Trust has sought to facilitate the creation of space within which our partners can raise awareness of pluralism and celebrate the country's ethnic diversity. Recognising the crucial role that young people play in building inter-community relations, the Trust has prioritised projects that encourage the participation of the youth.

Here we have highlighted the work of some of the partner organisations to whom we have made grants during the year.

Neelan Tiruchelvam Memorial Lecture

As part of our efforts to highlight the deteriorating state of human rights and the rule of law, the Trust invited Gareth Evans to deliver the eighth Neelan Tiruchelvam Memorial Lecture, titled 'The Limits to State Sovereignty: The Responsibility to Protect in the 21st Century'. Former Foreign Minister of Australia, Mr. Evans is now President of International Crisis Group, an independent non-governmental organisation working to prevent and resolve deadly conflict through research and advocacy.

Held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Colombo and given to an audience of more than 500 people, the lecture was not without controversy. Mr. Evans' lecture sparked extensive media interest and catalysed new thinking on the role of the international community in responding to human rights violations within

national boundaries. Considerable debate on the issue was also initiated amongst members of the government, the opposition, Tamil political parties, academics, international donors, the private sector and the public.

Funded in part by the Embassy of Switzerland, the lecture was subjected to harsh criticism by certain groups and individuals who challenged the concept of the 'responsibility to protect', asserting that this approach amounted to an attack on the sovereignty of the state and a means by which powerful international actors promoted their own economic and political interests. Despite this, the Trust feels the lecture served to initiate debate on human rights issues and the responsibility of the state and international community to protect and promote human rights.

“...over and again, when situations seemed to cry out for some response, the international community reacted erratically, incompletely, counter-productively or not at all...”

Gareth Evans, President of International Crisis Group

Families of the Disappeared

Founded in 1991, Families of the Disappeared was established in response to the 1987-1989 conflict between the state and the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna during which thousands of young people in the South disappeared.

Each year, Families of the Disappeared commemorates those who disappeared with a ceremony held in Seeduwa. The ceremony provides a communal space for family members and friends to remember and mourn those they lost. Recognising the imperative to build bridges between communities through shared experiences, this year families of those who have disappeared in the past year and a half were also invited to participate in the ceremony.

With assistance from the Trust, the ceremony also functioned as a meeting point for family and friends of those who disappeared and prominent human rights activists to discuss the prospect of initiating a national movement to agitate against continued disappearances. Significantly, this included a shared commitment to advocate on behalf of the families irrespective of who was responsible for the disappearances.



Relatives protest and raise public awareness of the continuation of disappearances



A mother mourns the loss of her child at the ceremony held in Seeduwa

Lanka Youth Organizations Network

Now consisting of 342 members, the Lanka Youth Organizations Network works to strengthen youth institutions and nurture young leaders in Sri Lanka.

Through the Network's Democratic Youth Leadership Programme, the Trust has supported its efforts to build the capacity of youth organisations in the Western province by improving their leaders' understanding of human rights and democratic values. As part of the programme, a group of more than 300 potential youth leaders met in the Gampaha district to receive training on leadership and the importance of democracy and pluralism. A similar programme was conducted in Colombo for 50 other youth leaders.

To encourage communication between member organisations, the Network also launched a youth newspaper called *Yovun Lanka* which features articles on a range of issues including the environment, relationships with the opposite sex, contraception and information technology.



Young religious leaders meet in Colombo for a Leadership and Human Rights workshop

“...from those workshops I got to understand how to live with different nationalities, different religions and different cultures. I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Lanka Youth Organizations Network regarding that great experience...”

Madhawa Dhananjaya of the Kalana Cooperative Foundation, Gampaha
a member of the Lanka Youth Organizations Network

Suriya Women's Development Centre

The Suriya Women's Development Centre works to raise awareness of, and advocate for, the rights of women across the country, with particular emphasis on the conflict-affected women of Batticaloa.

Through the Centre's Advocacy and Networking Programme, the Trust is able to support efforts to raise awareness of the plight of internally displaced women and advocate for legal reform on issues that affect women, including land rights, reproductive and health rights and family law. The Centre is one of the few organisations that use cultural activism to encourage discourse on gender issues at the community level. This approach has been proven to be a powerful medium through which to challenge entrenched myths, stereotypes and discriminatory social norms.

“...with the Trust's funds, we have been able to deliver a legal aid programme to women across Batticaloa. In doing so, we have documented and advocated on over 125 cases of violence against women, including instances of domestic rape and other forms of sexual abuse...”

Legal Aid Programme Officer,
Suriya Women's Development Centre

As a recipient of core funding, the Trust's support has enabled the Centre to explore and develop new approaches to address issues of gender injustice bolstered by the fact that the organisation's long-term financial sustainability is secured.

Association of Disabled Ex-service Personnel

The Association of Disabled Ex-service Personnel operates as a welfare association for former service personnel of the army, navy, air forces, police and their families across Sri Lanka. The Association has worked to empower its 11,000-strong membership to demand state support to improve their socio-economic and psychological wellbeing.

Funding from the Trust enables the Association to implement a series of human rights training programmes for 250 of its members. These programmes are designed to develop an understanding of human rights legislation, recognise human rights violations and the process through which to seek redress. Thus far, the programmes have been held in war veteran's villages in Salawa in Colombo, Ibbagamuwa in Kurunegala and Thombagodan in Kaluatar, and were facilitated by representatives from the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Colombo, the Sri Lanka Law Commission, officers from Divisional Secretariats and the Sri Lanka Police.

In addition, participants were encouraged to unite, and together with the Association, advocate for their rights and the provision of enhanced services and support from the state.



Disabled ex-service personnel attend a human rights training programme

Stages Theatre Group

Formed in 2000, the Stages Theatre Group works to push the boundaries of traditional theatre by staging innovative, original and multilingual plays, tours and workshops.

The Trust supported the Group's productions of Forum Theatre, focusing on the issues of domestic violence and the ethnic conflict. Staged at the Punchi Theatre in Colombo, Forum Theatre is an interactive theatre form that allows the audience to direct the actors and suggest plot alternatives in order to resolve the conflict-related scenarios put forward.

“...By using theatre in this manner, the production facilitates an open and honest exchange of views by the audience and encourages empathy amongst those from different backgrounds...”

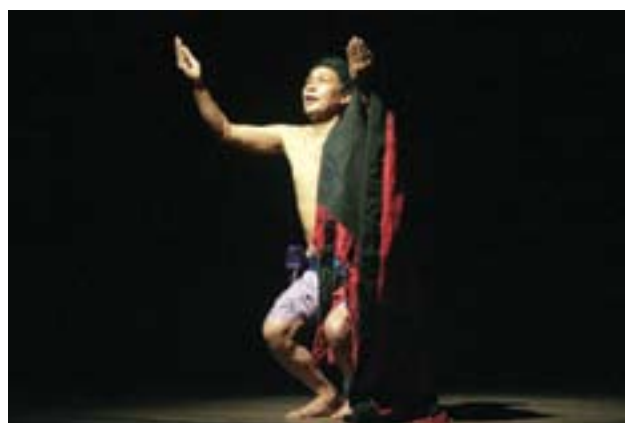
Forum Theatre, created by Nobel Peace Prize nominated writer and director August Boal, is often used as a means of empowering communities. By using theatre in this manner, the production facilitates an open and honest exchange of views by the audience and encourages empathy amongst those from different backgrounds. Its aim was to broaden perspectives on how the same situation can be viewed, interpreted and solved. The performances played to a full house on all five days it was staged.

Neelan Tiruchelvam Birth Commemoration

In commemoration of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam's 64th birthday, the Trust, in association with the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, the Law and Society Trust and Tiruchelvam Associates, hosted a play by acclaimed Indian director and producer Ratan Thiyam. Each year since Dr. Tiruchelvam's assassination in 1999, a cultural festival has been staged to celebrate his life and work and thereby keep alive his commitment to peace and reconciliation through dialogue and political change.

Funded in part by the Indian Centre for Cultural Relations, this year's performance had earned acclaim from audiences in London, New York and Tokyo amongst others. Titled *Wahoudok* or *Prologue* in English, the play linked myth with reality, following human evolution from the birth of the universe to the creation of living beings, the outset of human civilisation and into modern times.

The Chorus Repertory Theatre's performance was followed by a workshop conducted for local artists at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. As part of this, Ratan Thiyam spoke to performance groups from across the country, including the Butterfly Peace Garden from Batticaloa and 20 artists from the Western Province. The talk focussed on the development of drama in the South Asian Sub-continent and the ways in which it can be harnessed to advocate for and bring about positive social change.



One of the 27-person troupe perform at Dr. Tiruchelvam's birth commemoration

Partnerships



Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Recognising the crucial role the business community can play in bringing about a lasting solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka, the Trust has taken the step of partnering with private sector organisations to promote peace initiatives. The Trust has continued therefore to encourage the business community to play a similar role in Sri Lanka to that of their counterparts in the peace settlements of South Africa and Northern Ireland.

Building on a number of years of partnership, the Trust and the Peace and Reconciliation Committee of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce have worked towards building a representative coalition of stakeholders, including religious leaders, trade unionists and civil society groups to offer alternative responses to the current impasse in the country.

In addition, the Trust and the Chamber have continued their cooperation through the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund for Peace. Part of this fund consists of the Orphans Sponsorship Project, which encourages the business community to sponsor orphans in conflict-affected areas of the country. Last year the Project distributed Rs. 225,000 (more than US \$2,000), an increase of some 74% compared with 2006/07.

To learn more about the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, please visit www.chamber.lk.

Foundations for Peace

Working to advance equality, diversity and interdependence in areas of entrenched and persistent communal conflict, the Foundations for Peace network has become an increasingly important part of the Trust's work. The network is a collective of independent, indigenous grant-making foundations with representative organisations from Bangladesh, Colombia, India, Northern Ireland, Serbia, the United States and Sri Lanka.

The most significant initiative of the network has been the Victim/Survivor Empowerment and Peace-building project, supported by the European Union Special Programme on Reconciliation. The project has sought to document and share best practice strategies for supporting those affected by conflict, so that such individuals are empowered to make a contribution to social change and peace-building within their own country. The initiative has also explored the importance of indigenous grant makers and highlighted the role locally-based and locally-led foundations can play in spearheading social change.

To learn more about Foundations for Peace, please visit www.foundationsforpeace.org.

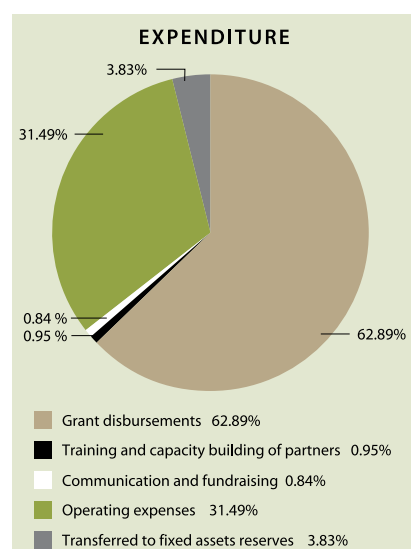
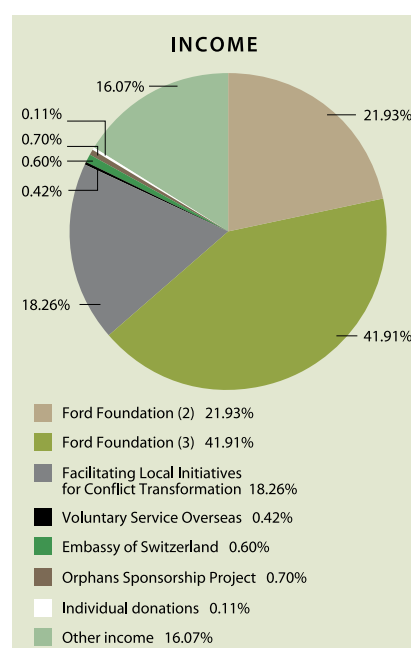


Finances

Income and Expenditure Account

This consolidated financial report provides a summary of our financial activities for the year ending 31st March, 2008.

| Income | SLR | USD |
|--|-------------------|----------------|
| Grants and donations | | |
| Ford Foundation (2) | 7,042,982 | 66,069 |
| Ford Foundation (3) | 13,459,320 | 126,260 |
| Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation | 5,850,000 | 54,878 |
| Voluntary Service Overseas | 135,000 | 1,266 |
| Embassy of Switzerland | 208,590 | 1,957 |
| Orphans Sponsorship Project | 225,000 | 2,111 |
| Individual donations | 35,000 | 328 |
| Other income | | |
| Interest on Endowment Fund and other investments | 3,339,044 | 31,323 |
| Neelan Tiruchelvam Birth Commemoration | 1,973,425 | 18,512 |
| Foreign exchange gain/loss | (130,264) | (1,222) |
| Loss on disposal of furniture | (22,467) | (211) |
| Total income | 32,115,630 | 301,272 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Grant disbursement | 21,559,141 | 202,243 |
| Training and capacity building of partners | 325,450 | 3,053 |
| Communications and fundraising | 289,754 | 2,718 |
| Operating expenses | 10,793,313 | 101,251 |
| Transferred to fixed asset reserves | 1,311,565 | 12,304 |
| Total expenditure | 34,279,224 | 321,569 |



A number of the grants shown refer to amounts drawn down from long-term funding agreements.

The income referred to as Ford Foundation (2) represents the amount drawn down from a grant totalling US \$280,000. Of this US \$80,000 was approved as an Endowment Fund and US \$200,000 to strengthen the institutional capacity of our partner organisations over a five-year period from July 2007. During the year under review the Trust received US \$180,000 of which the full US \$80,000 was deposited as the Endowment Fund. Part of the remaining balance amounting to US \$58,338 was expended and credited as income, with the remainder shown under the balance sheet of our full audited accounts.

Similarly, the income referred to as Ford Foundation (3) represents the amount drawn down from a grant totalling US \$300,000 to support partner organisations to promote peace, reconciliation and pluralism over a three-year period from August 2007. During the year under review the Trust received US \$190,000 and of which US \$118,986 was expended and credited as income, with the remainder shown under the balance sheet of our full audited accounts.

The grant received from the German Development Agency's project, Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation was provided to support partner organisations programmes and the Trust's operational expenses. The grant totalled US \$180,582 of which US \$72,232 has been received and US \$54,878 has been utilised by the Trust.

The other grants include funds provided by Voluntary Service Overseas to help furnish our new premises and the Embassy of Switzerland's contribution to the Neelan Tiruchelvam Memorial Lecture. The income received for the Neelan Tiruchelvam Birth Commemoration refers to receipts from sponsorship and ticket sales.

Our full audited accounts are available on request from the Trust's Secretariat.

The Trust's auditors are Joe Muttupulle & Co.

“The Board consists of individuals from the different communities that make up Sri Lanka’s diverse social fabric. Collectively they have a wealth of experience and expertise in law, human rights, constitutionalism, peace-building, social science research and financial services.”

The Board of Trustees

The Trust is fortunate to have a distinguished voluntary Board of Trustees united by a common commitment to peace, justice and human rights. The Board consists of individuals from the different communities that make up Sri Lanka’s diverse social fabric. Collectively they have a wealth of experience and expertise in law, human rights, constitutionalism, peace-building, social science research and financial services. The Board is active in the management of the Trust, working closely with it through both the finance and programme committees.

Ms. Sithie Tiruchelvam is the Chairperson of the Trust and wife of the late Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam. Ms. Tiruchelvam is a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka and is Senior Partner of Tiruchelvam Associates. She is also the Chair of the Foundations for Peace network and is a Bureau Member of the South Asians for Human Rights Board.

Dr. Pramilla Senanayake is the former Assistant Director General of International Planned Parenthood Federation, Chairperson of the Concept Foundation (Thailand), and Founder and Chairperson of the Board of the Educate a Child Trust. She is also a member of the Boards of Family Health International (USA) and WaterAid (UK).

Mr. Deva Rodrigo is the former Chairman of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce where he currently chairs its Committee on Peace and Reconciliation. Until recently he was the Territory Senior Partner of the Sri Lanka office of PricewaterhouseCoopers. He was a member of the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka between 2003 and 2006.

Ms. Ambika Satkunanathan is National Legal Consultant at the United Nations, Colombo. She has

worked as a researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies and the Law and Society Trust. She is a member of the Advisory Board of the Women and Media Collective.

Mr. Javid Yusuf is on the Presidential Commission of Inquiry to investigate serious violations of human rights in Sri Lanka. He has served as Sri Lanka’s Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Senior Advisor to the late Foreign Minister, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar. He was the Founder Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims, former Principal of Zahira College, Colombo and a member of Sri Lanka’s first National Human Rights Commission.

Mr. M. D. D. Pieris was a member of the former Ceylon Civil Service and thereafter a member of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. Formerly Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Pieris has been conferred the national honour of Deshamanya as well as the Degree of Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa) by the University of Colombo.

The Trust would like to express its immense gratitude to those who have completed their tenure on the Board. Our thanks in particular to Mr. Arjuna Mahendran and Professor Jayadeva Uyangoda, both of whom served since the Board’s inception, and also Ms. Kumudini Samuel and Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe.

The Trust would like to welcome Ms. Ambika Satkunanathan, Mr. Javid Yusuf and Mr. M. D. D. Pieris who joined the Board this year.

For the full biographies of our Board of Trustees, please visit www.neelan.org.



The Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust was established in 2001, two years after the assassination of Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, and is devoted to sustaining his legacy as an activist, peacemaker and intellectual.

The Trust is a Sri Lankan grant-making organisation that supports those working towards and advocating for peace, reconciliation, justice and human rights in Sri Lanka and abroad. The Trust seeks to share responsibility, resources and risks through strategic partnerships with the public sector, business community, Diaspora, civil society, academia and donors.



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