

Arunodaya

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அருணோதயம்

Quartly News Collection

Inter Community Student Exchange Programme

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A new day is dawning. Gentle sunbeams are glittering on the mornings dewdrops. Rays of morning sunshine flow across the mountains, Highlands and plains, a delight to the eye.

Just like this dawn flowing unhindered by pinnacles and planes, compassion, understanding and harmony was fostered in the minds of school children from schools Islandwide through a programme held the Inter community student exchange. programme by the centre for policy alternatives as part of it's peace building outreach work in 2006. School children transformed their grounds to a garden of flowers of all hues and shapes during the three day camps



Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) Outreach Unit



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Arunodaya is a periodical published by the Outreach Unit of Centre for Policy Alternatives. The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is an independent, non-partisan organisation that focuses primarily on issues of governance and conflict resolution. Formed in 1996 in the firm belief that the vital contribution of civil society to the public policy debate is in need of strengthening, CPA is committed to programmes of research and advocacy through which public policy is critiqued, alternatives identified and disseminated. Arunodaya contains a fraction of experiences of Advanced Level students and teachers who participated in the Inter Community Student Exchange Programme 2006 Views expressed in Arunodaya are not necessarily those of the organisation or its Board of Directors.

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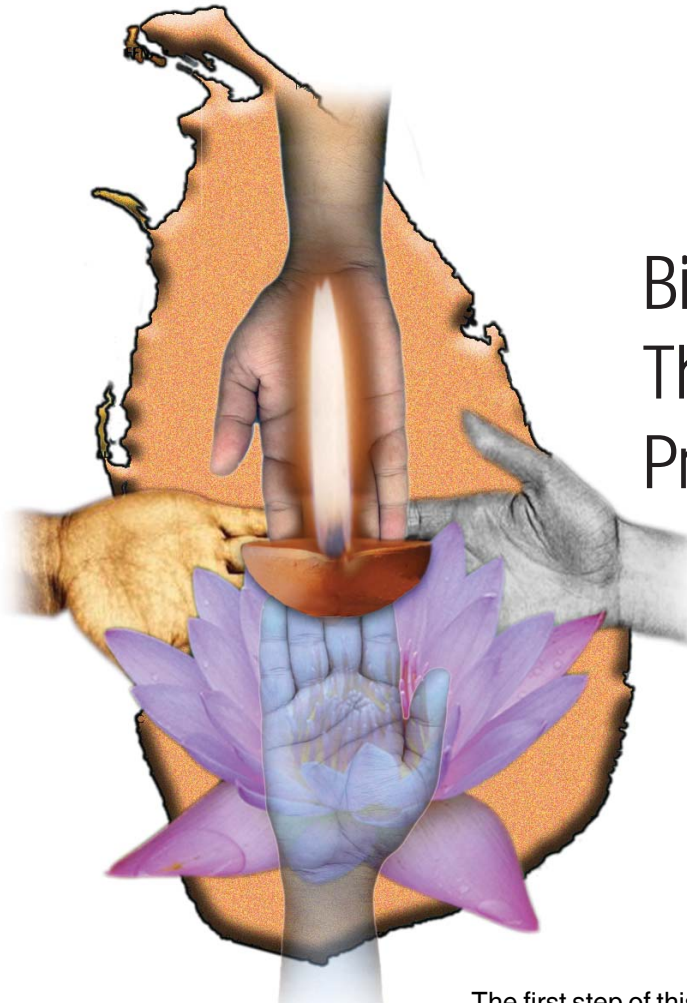
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Memories of brotherhood...





Birth of an Idea The Student Exchange Programme

Tudor de Silva, Dr. D. Nesiya, Dr. V. Ameerdeen, Mr. Sunanda Deshapriya and Ms. Shanthi Sachithanandan took part as the Resource Persons of the Programme.

The first step of this programme was a Teacher training workshop held from 27th-31st of August 2006 at Kandy Hotel Topas under the theme of "Respecting Diversity, Improving Social Attitudes & Co-Existence Among Students"

A group of 100 comprising Principals and Teachers from different provinces, belonging to different ethnic groups participated in the above Programme representing 49 schools in total.

Teachers expert knowledge in moulding attitudes of future generations was taken in to consideration as the key focus in planning this Programme.

Mr. S.G. Punchihewa, Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Dr. Ariyaratne Athugala, Professor K.

The teachers who participated for the Programme had a unanimous stance against war. It was also clear that they voiced their opinion in support of devolution of power as the solution to the ongoing national issue.

At this workshop, Student Exchange Programmes were proposed as a path to mould Student's attitudes under the theme "Towards a Society with tolerance for diversity"

The third session of the workshop was for drafting logistics of a programme which would achieve these goals in a effective manner. So the three day student exchange schedules were worked out & time tables & logistics sorted & agreed.



The proposed Line-up

Day One

- 1) Arrival & Welcome @ 2.00 p.m
- a) Registration of participants
- b) Encouragement to interact as pen-pals prior to participation to create a better impact towards understanding each other
- c) Once a teacher introduces a student, even though students may not know each other they can interact via mail.
- d) A Pen-Pal could welcome the other at their arrival to the respective school. There could be 'Guest- Friends' as well. But, at the second exchange session, only one person should participate.
- 2) Welcome
- a) Keeping in mind the different nationalities and cultures (i.e – If the Programme Venue is a Sinhala School – welcoming the participants by offering beetle leaves/ If the Programme Venue is a Tamil School - welcoming the participants by marking a

'pottu' on the forehead or by garlanding/ For Muslims – saying 'Assalam Ale Kum' in the traditional way keeping the two hands together)

- b) Escorting students to the Hostels
- c) Inviting guests to the main hall and treating them with refreshments
- d) Holding the meeting with the invitees e) Introducing and getting to know each-other
- f) Interval
- g) Agreeing & Appointing a Team Leader and making the line-up of activities
- h) Screening of Short-Films
- i) Dinner

Day Two

- 1) Wake up
- 2) Physical Fitness Programme & Reviewing the previous day
- 3) Religious observances
- 4) Breakfast

- 5) 'Sharamadana' Activities – Responsibility of deciding the work which needs to be done and supply of tools lies with those respective schools
- 6) Tea Break
- 7) Field Trip
- 8) Lunch
- 9) A lecture on 'improving students' attitudes'
- 10) Sports activities
- 11) Interval
- 12) Dinner
- 13) Cultural Show

Day Three

- 1) Wake up
- 2) Physical Fitness Programme & Reviewing the previous day
- 3) Religious observances
- 4) Breakfast
- 5) Planting a memorial tree
- 6) Tea Break
- 7) Presenting Group Discussions
- 8) Evaluating and Reviewing
- 9) Saying 'Good Bye'



Students in a delightful mood at the Students Camp held at the Galahitiyagoda Maha Vidyalaya in Ampara

The Chilly Mountainous Breeze

Light of the moon in the night
 Does not connect
 The North
 The South
 The Mountains
 Neither bothered of racial spirits
 The water of falls
 Does not care about low or high pinnacles
 Nature is equal to all of us
 Like the wind – let us blow
 Like the moonlight – soothingly cold
 Let us mark the end
 Of the battle

Chandana Pushpakumara
 Am/Uhana Maha Vidyalaya

Tamil College – Passara

Inter Community Student Exchange Programme

This was the first Student Camp of the Inter Community Student Exchange Programme organised by the Centre for Policy Alternatives.

One objective of the Programme was to take a team of students from Auradhapura Walisinghe Harischandra College to the Passara Tamil College, which would provide Sinhala Student's an opportunity to see and experience the lifestyle of estate sector Tamil students. This was also an opportunity for the Tamil students to share experiences with their fellow students who has lived and been brought-up in a completely different cultural atmosphere.

There were seven Student's Groups in this first Programme. They were given the opportunity to perform their talents by engaging in various kinds of activities and the opportunity to experience estate sector Tami people's less privileged lifestyle as well as to better understand the religious and cultural life patterns of them.



MARKING A POTTU at the Student Camp held at Passara Tamil College, the students of the school giving a traditional welcome to their fellow students from Anuradhapura Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya.

Everlasting memories of three beautiful days

A new day was dawning. Mist was vanishing slowly while morning sunshine was spreading across the top of the mountains.

Students of Passara Maha Vidyalaya were eagerly spreading across preparing to welcome their fellow colleagues of Anuradhapura Harischandra Maha Vidyalaya. It was a novel experience for the students of Passara Maha Vidyalaya to welcome a group of fellow colleagues whom they haven't met or even heard till that moment.

In a traditional welcome, according to the Hindu customs, a red 'pottu' was placed on each invitee student's forehead, followed by serving tea.

Mr. Manel Ratnayake, President of Uva Provincial Council and Mr. Arumugham, Principal of Passara Maha Vidyalaya hoisted the National Flag and the School Flag, respectively. The National Anthem was sung in Sinhala and Tamil. The Programme was commenced after the traditional oil lamp was lit by Mr. Manel Ratnayake, Mr. Lionel Guruge, unit Co-ordinator, CPA and the respective Principals.



Following to the religious sermons Mr. Lionel Guruge, Unit Co-ordinator, explained the objectives of the Programme. The students had the opportunity to perform and show their talents after Mr. Manel Ratnayake's speech.

The resonance of their songs and poems lingered upon the school premises.

The second phase of the Student Camp started with fitness exercises.

Students were assigned to groups and the Field Trip was set in motion. Students returned around 1.00 p.m. finishing the Field Trip. After having lunch and a break the students were given the opportunity to participate in sports activities.

Evening was reserved for cultural activities. The third day of the Camp was also commenced with fitness exercises. All students were given the opportunity to sing their School Anthem. Mr. Lionel Guruge invited the students to speak about their three-day experience at the Student Camp, which was the final phase of the Programme.

Mr. Arumugham, Principal of Passara Maha Vidyalaya made an evaluation of the overall Programme which was followed by the closing note of Mr. Lionel Guruge.



*The Student Camp Experience....
The Way We Felt*

The Student Camp Experience....

The Way We Felt

Immense Friendship

This was the first time we came on such a trip. The colleagues whom we got to know at this Camp expressed immense friendship. This Student Camp is a magnificent experience.

- **Gayan Indika**



We can't leave

When we came here, initially we didn't have much interest. But now we don't feel like leaving them. The friendship between us is so strong.

- **Vimukthi Senanayake.**



Responsibility

We went to see the houses of these people. Instead of houses there were small rooms. Sometimes there were 9 members living inside one room. Their minds and hearts are despondent. It's the Government's responsibility to build decent houses for those people.

- **Pathum Chamara.**



No divide

For the whole of yesterday we traveled in this area. There are a lot of differences between them and us. But we all are equal as human beings. Thus, we don't want any division.

- **Sanjeewa Sampath**



Inadequate Wages

The biggest problem of their parent's is inadequate wages. Their daily wage is less than Rs. 200. How can anybody live with such a small amount? It's nothing but a crime!

- **Manoj Sarath.**



- Samantha Wijesinghe. Got to know about the culture

We learnt about their culture. We shared happiness as well as sadness with them. We visited the Amini Estate and went to the Kadireshan Kovil as well, which gave us the opportunity to experience the Hindu culture and its traditions. These people are working like slaves. Their labour is devalued. They should be taken off from this tragic living condition and should be given a better life.

- **Isanka Dulanjali.**



No education

Yesterday we got to know about their living standards. In one family there were four children who were not going to school. It is good if those children are given a chance to participate for this sort of Student Camps. They too have a right for education.



Plans for the future

Mr. K.M Jayasuriya
Director – Education
Uva Province

Passara is an area where Sinhala, Tamil and Hindu communities live in co-existence. I am happy that such a valuable Programme was initiated in this sort of an area.

Labour resources of Sri Lankan youth have not been made use of to the maximum. The future should be planned with a proper vision engaging this youth. Children are the foundation of future development. This Programme is a support for those children to learn noble human virtues such as tolerance towards diversity, which is something additional to their knowledge from the textbooks. The total support is provided through the Charter of Education to enforce peace.



The team engaged in sports activities at the Camp held at Passara Tamil College



Let us build a society with tolerance towards diversity

Lionel Guruge
Outreach unit (CPA)

Sometime ago when I was addressing a seminar which took place in Monaragala area I asked a question from the students who were gathered.

“How many Tamil friends have you got?”

That was the question that I asked. But nobody answered to my satisfaction. I was thinking a lot about it. If the adults could succeed to develop attitudes in the hearts of children to understand and respect language and cultural diversities, wouldn't it be a way of avoiding future conflicts?

The opportunity for this Programme arose not because of me nor because of Centre for Policy Alternatives. It became a reality because of a dedicated group of good-hearted people and their belief in promoting respect for diversity among the young.

In my opinion, correct attitudes moulded during childhood are carried along even after becoming adults. Ninety nine per cent of the Southern community is unable to articulate in Tamil, which stands as a great barrier to co-existence for these two communities.

It is from our childhood that we should lay the foundation of Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim brotherhood.

This is a journey in search of humanity. The future of this country is yours. ‘We may be different to each other due to language and religion; yet we are equal as human beings’. That is the biggest lesson you should learn from this three day student exchange

True, we have differences. No one is alike to another. There are physical differences as well as social and cultural differences. We should be able to tolerate, accept and respect those differences. As much as a Sinhala child likes his or her culture, a Tamil child treasures their culture with equal fondness. Similarly the Muslim Child is fond of his or her culture. Thus, a child who belongs to one culture should not exclude another child from a different culture. Instead, they should be respected, understood and loved.

In your Field Trip you should have learnt a lot about the lifestyle in the estate sector. You would have built a pleasant bond with these people. This harmony should be carried along towards the future. By the end of this workshop a Tamil student should be able to remember at least fifty names of his or her friends. Similarly a Sinhala student should be able to remember at least fifty names of his or her friends. There is a war in this country because we have lost the thought of co-existence, which was supposed to blossom within and among us. There is a war in this country because respect for diversity and tolerance is overlooked by adults. You are lucky to have been chosen to carry the ‘message of humanity’ across all the colleges, all the villages and all the hearts. Our everlasting wish is to see that duty being implemented by you all.

Student Camp held at Bloomfield Maha Vidyalaya, Maskeliya

Eyes filled with curiosity, expectations and smiles were gazing towards the road out of the school gate. At one point there was a drizzle, which became gentle sunshine in the next minute. When Bloomfield students were gathering like bunch of bees another team who came from Athugalpura entered the Bloomfield school premises.

It was around 4.00 in the evening.

The Bloomfield school premises appeared a most picturesque scene with the arrival of Athugalpura students.



Students of Bloomfield Maha Vidyalaya awaiting to welcome the Athugalpura Students



Athugalpura students were given a welcome by garlanding which was accompanied with a red 'pottu' on their foreheads. The unblemished red 'pottu' was a symbol of Bloomfield student's compassion towards their fellow colleagues.

The two Principals of Gokarella Maha Vidyalaya and Medagama Maha Vidyalaya commenced the Camp by hoisting the National Flag. National Anthem was sung in Sinhala and Tamil. The traditional oil lamp was lit by Mr. Lionel Guruge, Co-ordinator outreach Unit, CPA. Mr. S. Sandanam, Executive Director, Upcountry Social Activity Organization (UPSAC), Mr. Nagulehswaran, Member of the Ambagamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha, Mr. Parameshwaran, Principal of Bloomfield Tamil College, Mr. Sivagnanam, Principal of Hindu College, Principal of Madamulla Maha Viduhala, Malsiripura, Principal of Gokarella Maha Vidyalaya, Mr. Saravanabhavana Kumara, Teacher of Bloomfield Tamil College, Mr. Chandrasekaram, Teacher of St. Joseph's College, Maskeliya, Mr. Sivasundaram, MP representing the Ambagamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha, Mr. P. Pangam, Chief Reporter of Virakesari, Ms. Thilaka Herath, Programme Co-ordinator of Kurunegala District and two student representatives. After the welcome speech Mr. Lionel Guruge, explained the Programme Objectives.

Next to express views was the Principal of Bloomfield College, who said "The crux of all religions is kindness, love and compassion." The country should be built on this foundation. Madam Chandrika Kumaratunge and Honourable Ranil Wickramasinghe made some efforts to ensure peace with sustainability. Honourable Mahinda Rajapakse is also making some efforts to accomplish the same goal. Let us show solidarity towards those efforts. Activating the peace process is the only way to solve the national issue in this country".

"Rice from Kurunegala to Maskeliya
Tea from Maskeliya to Kurunegala"

Said Mr. Chandrasekaran, Teacher of St. Joseph's College emphasizing the economic harmony between the two provinces. According to the Deputy Principal of Madamulla College, Programmes of such nature could be used to foster harmony among the children who belong to all nationalities. The importance of inter-communal harmony could be emphasised through this sort of Programmes and therefore should be given the due appreciation.

Mr. Saravana Bhavana, Teacher of Bloomfield College, gave the vote of thanks.

Students got to know each other while having tea. It was followed by the presentations of Mr. Ravi Chandralal and Mr. Sendil Sivagnanam, which explained the nature of the Student Exchange Programme. Prior to having dinner, an opportunity was given to the students to sing and enjoy the night. The teachers too joined the singing session.

The second day of the camp started with fitness activities while the second phase was the Feiled Trip, which was followed by lunch.



Students of Maskeliya Bloomfield College performing a traditional dance at the cultural show.

After the lunch break Mr. Gunasekara Gunasoma made a presentation on Sri Lankan Folk Literature. Mr. Sethil Sivagnanam supported by interpreting. The presentation focused on communal harmony and diversity depicted in Sri Lankan folk literature.



Students of Bloomfield Vidyalaya performing a dance item

Thalayum Thala Mudiyum kithulaka mala sema
Udayum Nadayum Rana Giravige Thuda sema

Kayila vanniyen Aadei demala patee
inen baden kondan lassayak vatee
inata reddha athivaanam ratak vatee
Dheviyo raka devan ma dhutu demala patee

demala liye nuba baase nobaase
Gindara vanna nuba adina sarase
Raththaranata piththala ek unaase
Dhenavada landune diya bonnata thibaase

Uss pila pita kukulu rala paai konduwaa
Paai konduwa mahale paai konduwaa
Sembuvakata wathura dama thanni konduwaa
Thanni konduwaa mahale thanni konduwaa



Mr. Gunasekara Gunasoma

Eminent Folklore Researcher and Author

Pinganakata bath bedala soaru konduwaa
Soaru konduwaa mahale soaru konduwaa
Kullakata nelli dama sulahu konduwaa
Sulahu konduwaa mahale sulahu konduwaa

Sihinigalu ran dhunu mita lookala vaayaa ge ran ramba pelalu
Dhepathula woo saki suvimpula loo dasengili babaloo ran palu sarulu
Keviliya loo handa nada kinduru ma deka thepalu muwa rala mukulu
Mal manda loo surangana vatilu sakiyon kathalu pothuvila sitilu

Mesurangana dutu yuga nethina ena kandulu thana thunyama indana
Mithuru dena sema dena visina landa lebunoth medhina
danasakina mini barana thana kara palandhamina age sithu lesina
rata vatina ran mala thana ran dhahasakina ran ellamina

landhune varalasa peera bandhinata dhengnai kedapath gennala
landhune piyayuru nethalae bedhumata dhengnai ran viti gennala
landhune thunu inga nethala endhumata dhengnai oliyal gennala
landhune kalu landha ma wetha sityata dhengnai sannas liyavaala



Then it was the time for sports activities.

Around 7.30 in the evening the Cultural Festival began with a welcome dance performed by Bloomfield students. On the third day of the Camp students were given the opportunity to express their views and comments.

Biggest Experience

Chinthaka Wimalasena

This was the biggest ever experience in my school life and it was for the first time I had the opportunity to get know Tamil and Muslim friends.



Never Forgotten

Sameera Lakmal

We shared human spirits of our hearts. We learnt how to live collectively. These experiences are never forgotten. It will have a definite impact on our lives.



Hard Life

Niluka Damayanthi

We experienced the tragic lifestyle of the people who are living in estates lands. Their daily wage is less than 140 rupees. It's difficult to figure-out how they are living with such a small amount.



Regaining Peace

Farshan

Ancient king Pali valued brotherhood and peace. In this camp we learnt this well.



Teachers representing St. Joseph's College, Bloomfield College Medamulla Maha Viduhala, Gokarella Maha Viduhala and Hindu College as well as the District Coordinator of Kurunegala Women's' Development Centre, Ms. Thilaka Herath & Mr. Lionel Guruge on behalf of Centre for Policy Alternatives made their speeches, followed by the vote of thanks which was done by Mr. Saravana Bhavana from Bloomfield College. The Programme concluded with two peace songs.





Students of Bloomfield Vidyalaya bids adieu to Athugalpura Student

We should set an example

Mr. Naguleshwaran

President of Ambagamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha

Ambagamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha is comprised of Sinhala and Tamil MPs. Recently we received 2 million rupees for the development of Sinhala villages. As Tamil MPs we were not against developing Sinhala villages with that fund even though we didn't get funds for the development of Tamil villages. Instead we offered our support for the development work in those Sinhala areas. But Sinhala MPs decided to split the fund into two and set aside one million for the development of Tamil villages as well.

As people's Representatives we have set an example for the rest of the Pradeshiya Sabhas by



working collectively and cooperatively disregarding race, religion or cast differences.

Conflicts could be resolved only through commitment and practical involvement in order to accomplish peace. This Student Camp is a strong foundation to groom and mould the attitudes of children towards co-existence.

Pioneering Service

Mr. Devaraj

Principal - Bloomfield Tamil Maha Vidyalaya

Children are the pioneers and ambassadors of peace and this is a significant programme encouraging students to understand the importance of peace. Inspiring the hearts of children with the true essence of peace is indeed a historical service in building a noble human society.



Garden with a variety of flowers

Mr. Manel Ratnayake

President – Uva Provincial Council



The Majority of us does not have a sense about the culture, life style and religion of estate sector Tamil people. There is some distance and detachment among estate sector Tamil people and Sinhala people. The degree of destruction due to the war, which continued throughout a period of 25 years, is massive.

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation. Many problems arose over the past decades due to lack of understanding of the aforesaid fact. One reason is not having enough understanding and acceptance of cultural, religious and language differences of different ethnicities. The two main political parties in this country are in support of a political solution as the process to end the war. At present, it has got confirmed that this war cannot be stopped by a military solution; a military process would only make the killing continue

Some Buddhist monks are not in support of a political solution, which is not the stance of the majority of Buddhist monks.

LTTE is not a political movement. But the conditions, which prevailed for a long time, created a strong base for them. They got pushed into extremes. This conflict should be solved by reasonable devolution of power, which will protect the identity and dignity of all communities. There's no beauty in garden with same kind of flowers. There should be a variety of them to bring-out the beauty. The same theory applies to human society

Student's Opinion

Equal in opinion

Shyamalee Doluwegedara

I'm happy to see all the people in this area living in peace. We are equal in our opinion even though our languages are different. I realized it due to my participation in this Camp. I'm sure that this friendship would last forever. How good it would be if this ambience exists in all places of the country. Let us continue this camaraderie even as pen pals.



A 'mottu' for the first time

Shashini Biyagama

We came to Baddula from Senkadagala. But we haven't associated much with Tamil people. Most of us don't know the Tamil language. But most of the Tamil students know all three languages, which is something we should be happy of. I have never kept 'mottu' so far. But I had one today. I never expected Tamil people to be so friendly. But the beauty of misty mountains cannot be seen in these people's lives.



We saw their living condition. I would like to speak in Tamil. I would also like to write in Tamil. I want to associate with these people continually. The reason for this war is our inability to communicate in Tamil. But Tamils knew Sinhala. That's where the condition turned-out to be a problem.

A Sad Story

Milinda Uchitha

Our observations showed us the sad saga of their lives. They haven't got the opportunity to have proper education. Their wages are so low. The experiences we had because of them are tremendous.



Camaraderie

Chandani Ratnayake

They welcomed us with a great sense of camaraderie. We were treated well. We don't know Tamil. But they knew both languages. They don't like this division among us. I thought they are leading a happy life. But that's just the surface. They are lives are filled with sadness and difficulties.



A beautiful experience

Ayodya Dilini

We came to this hardcore rural area from Kandy. Even though we live in Delthota, we haven't associated much with Tamil people. Just for these three days we have picked-up few Tamil words. This is a beautiful experience. These colleagues are heading for the future regardless of their poor living conditions. We too should take it as an experience.



treated with lodging, food and above all pleasant conversation.

We Sang

Darshana Kumara

It was for the first time that we had such a beautiful experience. During the three days at the Camp we didn't sleep in the nights; instead we sang throughout the night. There was no difference to the songs we sang. Everybody enjoyed. It was not difficult for us to connect and exchange our ideas with each other.



What talent they have

Chameera

We were welcomed with compassion. We realized how wealthy you all are with your humanity. We also realised how talented you all are. We may be different on the surface but within we all are equal. Your knowledge and opinion was useful to us. It's good if this exposure could be given to others as well.



Distrust faded away

Shashika Dilhani

When we came here first we had some fears not knowing whether we would be able to be with Tamil students. We don't know Tamil. We had the problem of exchanging our ideas with them. But it was later only we realized how good they are with their knowledge in Sinhala. So the fear and distrust faded off. We felt all of as children of one mother.



Biggest Experience

Chandrika Kumari

This is the biggest experience I ever had. This was a good opportunity for us to understand and eliminate the differences among us as Sinhala and Tamils. We were



From Childhood

*Principal – Monaragala
Madulla Maha Vidyalaya*

This is the first time ever in the school history a programme was organized for promoting unity among different communities. The languages we use to exchange our ideas are different. But not our hearts.



During my schooldays I had two Tamil friends called Padmanathan and Mohomad. We studied in Sinhala medium. We are in touch with each other to date. I also had lot of Tamil friends during my university period. The bond blossomed many years ago has not changed at all. But our society has got distant due to racial factors and ethnic issues. We have forgotten that we all are Sri Lankans. I hope that this programme will be a support to eradicate those conditions.



First Step

Mr. C. Gunaratne

Director Education - Madulla Sector

I'm happy to see this gathering of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim representatives from six schools. All the 22 schools in Madulla are Sinhala and this indeed is a unique experience.

There is a Ministry for National Integrity and Peace. There are trained officers as well. Programmes are being implemented according to Ministry's circulars. In that sense school Interact Clubs are very special. But I don't think the expected targets were reached since our area had only Sinhala schools.



Humanity

Camp held at – Saraniya Tamil Maha Vidyalaya, Badulla

Date – 27th – 29th October 2006

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Saraniya Tamil Vidyalaya	25	26	6	16	73
Haliela Tamila Vidyalaya	13	17	1	2	33
Sprinvalley Tamil Vidyalaya	13	11	3	1	28
Maha/Karagaskada Navoda School	50	50	7	3	110
					224
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					10
Total					264

Camp held at – Karagasgada Navodya School, Kandy

Date – 02nd – 04th February 2007

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Teachers	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Maha/Karagaskada Navoda School	53	39	11	8	111
Haliela Tamila Vidyalaya	15	17	1	2	33
Sprinvalley Tamil Vidyalaya	15	15	4	3	37
Saraniya Tamil Vidyalaya	22	14	5	4	45
					226
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					40
Total					276

Camp held at – Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya, Anuradhapura

Date – 03rd – 05th November 2006

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya	39	24	5	3	71
B/Lunugala Tamil Vidyalaya	28	19	4	2	53
B/Passara Tamil Vidyalaya	51	35	6	1	73
					197
From CPA					18
Other students and participants					30
Total					245

Camp held at – Passara Tamil College, Badulla

Date – 22nd-24th September 2006

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya	50	53	5	5	113
B/Lunugala Tamil Vidyalaya	28	19	4	2	53
B/Passara Tamil Vidyalaya	31	35	10	5	73
					239
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					5
Total					245

Camp held at – Zahira Vidyalaya, Ampara

Date – 09th – 11th February 2007

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
A/Zahira Muslim Vidyalaya	30	61	3	2	97
A/Vivekananda Tamil Vidyalaya	5	20	1	1	27
Ku/Hindu Tamil Vidyalaya	10	21	2	2	35
Ma/Mabadda Vidyalaya	0	10	1	11	22
					170
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					45
Total					254



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Field Trip to Bloomfield Estate by students from Athugalpura

Camp held at – Madulla Maha Vidyalaya, Monaragala

Date – 19th –21st January 2007

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Mo/Madulla Maha Vidyalaya	30	31	2	4	67
A/Zahira Maha Vidyalaya	18	28	2	2	50
A/Vivekananda Tamil Vidyalaya	5	13	0	2	20
Mo/Vipulananda Tamil Vidyalaya	12	13	0	1	26
Mo/Bakinilahawela Vidyalaya	8	8	0	2	30
Ba/Lunugala Tamil Vidyalaya	15	10	2	2	30
					211
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					5
Total					226

Camp held at – Hatton Highland Vidyalaya, Hatton

Date – 29th September – 01st October 2006

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Nu/Highland Vidyalaya	29	9	2	0	40
Nu/Puliyawatte Tamil Vidyalaya	0	9	1	0	10
Nu/Norwood Tamil Vidyalaya	8	26	2	2	38
Am/Galahitiyagoda Maha Vidyalaya	28	8	3	2	41
Am/Uhana Maha Vidyalaya	23	10	3	2	35
Am/Rajagalatanna Maha Vidyalaya	18	13	2	2	35
					202
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					15
Total					227



Camp held at – Ampara Galahitiyagoda Maha Vidyalaya

Date – 16th 18th February 2007

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
B/Passara Tamil Vidyalaya	21	14	5	2	42
AM/Galahitiyagoda Vidyalaya	28	8	3	7	46
AM/Uhana Vidyalaya	17	10	2	2	31
AM/Rajagalathenna Vidyalaya	7	7	1	0	15
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					15
Total					159

Camp held at – Maskeliya Bloomfield Atmil Vidyalaya, Nuwara Eliya

Date – 06th – 08th October 2006

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Nu/Bloomfield Tamil Vidyalaya	21	19	3	3	46
Nu/St. Joseph's Tamil Vidyalaya	21	11	1	1	34
Ku/Gokarella Maha Vidyalaya	15	28	4	2	49
Ku/Madamulla De Mel Vidyalaya	26	17	3	2	48
Ku/Hindu Tamil Vidyalaya	13	9	2	1	25
					202
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					20
Total					232

Camp held at – Hindu Tamil Vidyalaya, Kurunegala

Date – 23rd – 25th February 2007

Name of the School	Female Students	Male Students	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
Nu/Bloomfield Tamil Vidyalaya	24	19	7	4	54
Ba/Passara Tamil Vidyalaya	20	26	4	2	52
Ku/Gokarella Maha Vidyalaya	12	23	2	2	38
Ku/Madamulla De Mel Vidyalaya	12	18	2	3	35
Ku/Hindu Tamil Vidyalaya	9	10	1	1	21
					200
From CPA					10
Other students and participants					20
Total					230



Students and teachers of Zarnia Vidyalaya awaits to welcome the invitees according to their traditional customs

Camp held at Zarniya Tamil Maha Vidyalaya, Badulla

27th of October 2006 was a day of drizzle. Around 4 p.m students of Karagaskada Maha Vidyalaya, Kandy came to the venue, Zarniya Maha Vidyalaya. The School Band escorted the visitors.

The children of Badulla welcomed the children from Kandy by placing a 'pottu' on their foreheads. President of the Uva Provincial Council, Mr. Manel Ratnayake hoisted the national flag while Mr. Lionel Guruge of CPA hoisted the flag of Inter Community Students Exchange Programme. The national anthem was sung in Sinhala and Tamil. The traditional coconut oil lamp was lit by Mr. Manel Ratnayake, President of Uva Provincial Council, Mr. Lionel Guruge, co-ordinator outreach (CPA) The Principal of Karagaskada Maha Vidyalaya, Zarniya Tamil Maha Vidyalaya, Springvalley Vidyalaya, Haliela Tamil Maha Vidyalaya, Ms. Kaumadi Ranaweera, Project Coordinator, Centre for Policy Alternatives and by two students.

The welcome address was given by a student of Zarniya Tamil Maha Vidyalaya which was followed by religious sermons. Coordinator of Centre for Alternatives Mr. Lionel Guruge explained the Programme objectives.

The programme was described as a journey in search of humanity. Students who belong to a particular ethnic group not having friends from other ethnic groups was mentioned as a barrier for co-existence, by Mr. Guruge.

Next inline was the speech of the Chief Guest, Mr. Manel Ratnayake, President, Uva Provincial Council.

“We are a multi-ethnic and a multi-cultural nation. Forgetting that key fact has been the reason for this war. We need a system and a process to understand this diversity among us. Though we are equal as human beings we do have language and cultural diversities. We should go for a political solution for this war while accepting and respecting diversity and for that we need to support and strengthen the all party agreement among political parties”.

The Principals of Zarnira Vidyalaya and Karagaskada Vidyalaya also expressed their opinion about the Student Exchange Programme.

Subsequent to the main speeches, a regulation code was agreed in order to proceed with the Student Camp.

The participants were given the opportunity to watch a documentary film on ‘Natti Kutthu’, the traditional theatre style in the Tamil culture. Students enjoyed a singing session before having dinner.

The second day of the Camp began with fitness exercises as usual. Field Trip was the next activity, lined-up.

After the lunch break Mr. Gunesekara Gunasoma initiated a discourse on diversity and cultural co-existence epitomized in Sri Lankan folklore. Some sports activities took place in the latter part of the day.

The cultural festival began around 7.30 p.m. Students comments on the last day of the Camp are as follows;



Schoolboys of K/Karagaskada Vidyalaya arriving the Camp held at Ba/ Zarniya Vidyalaya



Schoolgirls of K/Karagaskada Vidyalaya arriving the Camp held at Ba/ Zarniya Vidyalaya



Teachers who came to Badulla from Senkadagala Puravara sharing a moment of happiness

Feel like coming

Prabaharan

We thank all the students from Karagaskada Vidyalaya and since we have to wait till next January to visit you all, I feel like getting into your bus so that I can come with you all.



Teacher's Opinion

Bilingual Education

Former Principal of Zarnia Vidyalaya

During the period as a teacher I have participated in many similar Programmes and this sort of Programmes play a very important role in achieving peace. Four schools got the opportunity to interact and build a relationship because of this event. Our country would have benefited in a better way if we had a bilingual education system.



All are equal

Vijaya Prabha

Our languages are different; our cultures are different. But we all are equal as human beings just like a group of kittens of the same mother. If we unite we can accomplish peace.



Relevant

Principal of Karaskada Madya Maha Vidyalaya

We are very fortunate. This Programme initiated by Centre for Policy Alternatives is very relevant. The message of peace has touched the hearts of these students in a beautiful way.



Care of a mother

Kaumadi Ranaweera

Centre for Policy Alternatives

The Principal of this school looked after of these students with the care of a mother. The contribution of Mr. Wasantha Kumara and the schoolmaster who came from Delthota was phenomenal. You all considered this Programme as one of your own and not something done by some outside party. That was the reason behind the success of this Programme.





Students of Am/Galahitiyagoda Vidyalaya and Paasara Tamil Maha Vidyalaya in conversation



The welcome dance performed by the students of Am/Galahitiyagoda Maha Vidyalaya



Students who took part for the Field Trip at the Camp held at Harischandra Maha Vidyalaya visiting a house at Kukulewa area



A student of Passara Tamil Maha Vidyalaya offering a commemoration plant to the invitee school at the commemoration tree planting session held at A/Harischandra Vidyalaya



Students about to start sports activities at the Camp held at Hatton Highland Vidyalaya



At the Camp held at Passara Tamil Maha Vidyalaya, students and teachers of Passara and Lunugala Tamil Maha Vidyalaya waiting to welcome the invitee schools



At the Camp held at K/Karagaskada Vidyalaya, students of the school singing the national anthem celebrating the 59th anniversary of the Independence Day.



Students of Bloomfield Vidyalaya giving a traditional welcome to the invitee students of Ku/Hindu Tamil Vidyalaya



A group of Paasara Tamil Vidyala students having their lunch at Ku/Hindu Tamil Maha Vidyalaya sports ground



At the Camp held at Ku/Hindu Tamil Vidyalaya, students of Passara Tamil Vidyalyala and Athugalpura Vidyalaya in their Field Trip



A group of invitee students enjoying sports activities at the Camp held at Madulla Madya Maha Vidyalaya



Students and teachers of Athugalpura Vidyalaya arriving the Camp held at Maskeliya Bloomfield Vidyalaya



Students of Ku/Hindu Vidyalaya, Matale Mahabedda Maha Vidyalaya, A/Vivekananda Vidyalaya and A/Zahira Vidyalaya planting a commemoration tree at the Camp held at A/Zahira Vidyalaya



Receiving advice and guidance before leaving on the Field Trip at the Students Camp held at Maskeliya Bloomfield Vidyalaya



School Band of the Ba/Zarniya Maha Vidyalaya escorting the invitee schools



A student of Karagaskada Vidyalaya bids adieu to another student of Ba/Zarniya Vidyalaya at the end of the Camp.



School Band of Highland Vidyalaya ready to welcome their guest invitees

Camp held at Highland Vidyalaya, Hatton

Highland Vidyalaya, Norwood Vidyalaya and Puliyawatte Vidyalaya were the care-partner schools of this Camp. Ampara Uhana Maha Vidyalaya, Rajagalathanna Maha Vidyalaya and Galahitiyagoda Vidyalaya were the invitee schools.

The students of hospitality partner schools gave traditional welcome for the invitee students who arrived at the Hatton Highland Vidyalaya by placing a 'pottu' on their foreheads which was a memorable experience for the invitee students.

Mr. Lionel Guruge, Unit Co-ordinator Outreach Unit (CPA), The Principal of Hatton Highland Vidyalaya and Mr. Buddhi Gunasekera, President of Hatton Inter-Racial Friendship Foundation, hoisted the National Flag and the School Flag. After lighting the traditional oil lamp and religious observances Mr. Lionel Guruge made the welcome speech and explained the Programme objectives.

"This gathering of students from all parts of the country, students who have never met before, is indeed a unique experience for all of us. In a country scattered by the national issue caused due to distrust and doubt towards each other, such a gathering is a great example for others.



School children are the future of any country. They should be groomed with good virtues. Respecting different identities and tolerance towards diversity are two most important factors of those virtues. This Camp promotes positive attitudes which is common and equal for all and it leaves no allowance to have separate attitudes over different communities.” Said Mr. Lionel Guruge emphasising the importance of the Student Camp.

Mr. R. Sathyasheelan, Principal of Norwood Tamil Viduhala gave the welcome speech on behalf of hospitality partners. Mr. Muttukumar of Highland Viduhala also addressed the gathering on behalf of hospitality partners. Vote of thanks were given by Mr. S. Sandanam, President of Kandurata Active Organization while Mr. Ravi Chandralal and Mr. Jagath Liyanarachchi explained the nature of the Student Camp. Cleanliness, protecting common amenities and property, punctuality was some of the key factors, which were requested to pay attention during the three-day stay.

Then the participants were assigned into groups. Each group was a blend of Sinhala and Tamil students.

The second day of the Camp started-off with fitness exercises as usual, which was followed by breakfast and then the Field Trip. The objective of the Field Trip was to observe the lifestyle in the estate sector. Later, Mr. Gunasekara Gunasoma made a presentation on the folk culture in Panampattuwa and the inter-cultural behavioural patterns and relationships.

Panampattuwa is a unique example for good inter-cultural relationships. Even though there is a certain degree of scatter between the cultural behaviours, people belonging to the key races and religions live in harmony to date. People of Panampattuwa articulate in all three languages, setting an example for others. They show great commitment in protecting cultural norms. But their peaceful lifestyle was shattered as a consequence of ‘Black July’ riots in 1983.

Students engaged in sports activities after the presentation and a beautiful cultural show went onboard in the evening. The Third day of the Camp was started off with a ‘Sharamadana’. Students and teachers were given the opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences marking the finale of the Students Camp. The three-day Camp was concluded after having lunch.



Field Trip by students from the Camp held at Highland Vidyalaya

A lesson for Policy Makers

Mr. Saman Premasiri Wickramasinghe

President of Madulla Pradeshiya Sabha

Ninety nine per cent who lives in this area are Sinhala. Tamils and Muslims are relatively less a very small minority but this is a good opportunity and a support for the children who live here, as well for the children who came to this area due to communal problems, to think and live as one family. This is also an example for the Policy Makers to re-think on their roles in developing policies, especially in the context of the current crisis. The future of this country would be beautiful if harmony could be fostered in the hearts of these students. Obviously you all will have to face obstacles and hindrances. But what is important is to move ahead tackling those obstacles with maturity.



Opinions of Madulla Students

Sri Lanka with brotherhood

Elendrian

This is the first time that I had such an experience. We are grateful to all those who showed brotherhood. We accomplished a lot of new things. For us what is most important is unity and co-existence. Let us build a Sri Lanka with brotherhood.



Compassion

Saharabahu

We exchanged ideas with the people whom we met at the village as well the Buddhist monks. We felt the compassion and innocence of their lives.



Cultural understanding

M. Kannadasan

Two months ago, one of my English teachers asked me to join him on a trip. That was a very valuable experience. On the day of our workshop we had a chat with Namal Oya people where we got an idea about the cultural patterns of that village. My sincere thanks go to those who gave us that opportunity.



Will continue forever

M.H. Akram

It's sad to depart after three days of closeness. But certainly this bond among us will continue forever.



Problems could be solved

H.W. Ananda

We got the opportunity to come together. Many problems in this country could be solved if others also had the same opportunity to unite.





Camp held at Galahityagoda Vidyalaya, Ampara



Students sharing their dinner at the Camp held at Am/Galahityagoda Vidyalaya.

There's no war here

Mr. Elendrayan
Passara Vidyalaya

We did three programmes in our school with the phenomenal support of our principal. Many schools were supposed to participate for this Programme. But due to the conflict situation the parents were reluctant to send them. It was only after we came here we realized that there is no such war in this area.



Let us build a group of students who respect diversity. We all like our cricket team to win and we all cheer for them. The cricket team is comprised of players who represent different religions and races. If we can think in the same line about our society as well, it would be easy to solve these problems.



Should touch each area

Sub Inspector from Uhana Police

We were in the 35th Colony prior to the war. Even though there were people from two different ethnicities we associated with each other very well. We were supposed to come back due to the war. It was Tamils who informed us about the pending conflict situation and asked us to save our lives by returning to our own areas. There was much fellowship among us.

We are Sri Lankans and we are supposed to move forward. Our children might be subjected to manipulation and persuasion. But we are unable to live segregated. Children who visited this area would have realized the innocence of these children. There is no ethnic difference in a space of humanity. Tamil people are so human. I still remember how Tamils in our area came and informed my father to find escape in order to avoid the riots.

It is very important to eliminate discriminatory ethnic attitudes from the minds of children. The Government should support these kinds of Programmes and touch each area with such Programmes. But some people promote conflict, which is nothing but tragic.



The lost harmony

Sector Education Director

The harmony between different ethnic communities has been lost. As Government Officers of this area, we are happy to participate in such Programmes, which could be considered as an attempt to regain that lost harmony. Students from Nuwara Eliya were ready to come, but sadly due to the riots in Aranthalawa area there were unable to make it for this Camp. But it is indeed creditable of CPA to organize this Camp against all odds.



Sustained Relationships

Sector Education Director

We should respect diversity and for that children of different ethnicities should be given the opportunity to exchange their emotions and ideas. The success of this Programme would be based on continuation of the friendships which bloomed during these three days.



At the end of the Camp held at Ba/Zarnia Vidyalaya a student of Karagaskada Vidyalaya scribbling her greetings for a fellow colleague



Student's Opinions

Many Examples

R.F.M. Navoda

There are many examples, which we can gain from Tamil children. Irrespective of all the difficulties that they face in their day-to-day lives, they still face life with courage.



and felt like we knew each other from our previous lives. We never thought that we would get this close. Two more schools were supposed to join the Passara Vidyalaya. Unfortunately they couldn't make it. But finally Passara Vidyalaya came to take part in the Camp.

Frankly we feel sad. True that you all made it somehow to the Camp. But there are problems in the North and East and we are unable to go anywhere without fear. Why and how did it happen? But we got unbelievably close to each other. I feel all the children across the country as my own brothers and sisters.

There are some who prefer war

M.D.C Pushpakumara

We should lay the foundation to build a better Sri Lanka through Programmes of such nature and we shouldn't allow anybody to inflict the germ of warfare in the hearts of children. This war is disgusting. But there are some who support it. That is where the problem lies.



Should stick together

Pushpakumara

We should stick together while respecting our cultural differences among us. The experience we had by spending three days with Passara students is immense. The team felt sad when one student fell-down and cried. The team felt happy when another team member was laughing with happiness. I wish for another Camping experience like this for us to get together. We should create the opportunity on our own in case if an organization fails to arrange similar Programmes. Our greatest happiness is to live as one big family without any racial differences.



Change of attitudes

Roshan

These sorts of Programmes are compulsory to change the attitudes of people.



A bond from previous life

Sewmini

I didn't have any Tamil friends before. But thanks to this Programme I got know many Tamil friends. I thank Sir Buddhi for giving this opportunity for us. We went to the Nuwara Eliya Programme where we met lot of Tamil friends. But there was no difference between us just because they were Tamils and we were Sinhala.



Our minds are unsullied

Manjula Damayanthi

Now we have friends both from Badulla and Nuwara Eliya. We can meet at anytime for anything. Our minds are still unsullied. It's difficult to change the attitudes of our adults. But it's easy to groom the attitudes of our generation. We realized that we all are equal as human beings despite our ethnic differences, which was the biggest lesson we learnt from this Programme.





Students engaged in fitness exercise starting the day at the Camp held at K/Karagaskada Vidyalaya

Camp held at Karagaskada Vidyalaya, Kandy



Children of one mother

Mr. Mujabdeen

Public Relations Secretary - Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion

We, Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims are children of one mother. Even though the regime of Sinhala Kings governed and protected the country with adherence on good governance procedures, today this country is scattered due to a tragic war. My family name has a part called 'Thannewalawwa' which is a Sinhala surname almost 400 years old. As Muslims we abide by co-existence when we live with Sinhala people. Thus, we don't accept any cause of conflict.



Lost Co-existence

Mr. Saman

President of Pradeshiya Sabha

Sometime ago both Sinhalese and Tamils used to study in this school. But now the situation has changed. The bond in the past has changed. When Mr. D.S.Senanayake came to Sri Lanka with the message of independence he was accompanied by Mr. Ponnambalam Ramanathan. They are the once who were most happy. But today only the people in the South experiences the freedom. The actual name of the last King of the Sinhala regime was Kandasami Rajathurey. But Sinhala people accepted him as their King. We have always lived with co-existence throughout the history and it's tragic that situation has changed at present. But this kind of Programmes has the capacity to carry a new message to the society.



Lost Values

Dr. V. Amirdeen

My name is Vellaithambi Ameerdeen. We already discussed the relationship between Sinhala and Muslim communities. I'm going to talk about the relationship between Muslim and Tamil communities. What has happened to the relationship between North and East? We are in search of something, which we already had with us, sometime ago. We celebrate independence, but are we actually free by all means? Where is the struggle for freedom? The answers are up to you. As leaders of the future you all are expected to strengthen the foundation we have laid.



Students in conversation enjoying a break at the Camp held at K/Karagaskada Vidyalaya



Student's experience paddy harvesting as a part of their Field Trip at the Camp held at Ku/Hindu Tamil Vidyalyaya

Camp held at Hindu Tamil Vidyalyaya, Kurunegala



Need of present era

Mr. Niranjan Wickramasinghe

Honourable Minister of Wayamba Youth Affairs

This kind of a Programme is indeed needed in the present era. Considering the state of the country at present, the need for this sort of Programmes are very high. People might judge these kinds of Programmes from different point of views, which is something we should expect. Any good effort is expected to face such opinions. But barriers could be defeated if the efforts are made with good intentions.

This is a special occasion where we saw Muslim, Sinhala and Tamil students living with co-existence for the past three days. But as the Minister of Wayamba Youth Affairs, this is not something new to me. In the area that I live I see estate sector Tamil labourers, Muslims and Sinhala people living with co-existence without having any problems. This ethnic issue should have been solved long ago. Since there was no proper understanding in the process of resolving conflict, the country got drenched in a war situation. A political solution is the only way out of this crisis.



Students of Passara Tamil Vidyala in their Field Trip at the Camp held at A/Harischandra Vidyalaya

Camp held at Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya, Anuradhapura



A united Sri Lanka by tolerance towards diversity

Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu

Executive Director, CPA

A strong bond has been formed among these school students. This bond should continue: not only for today, but forever. You understood how to respect diversity. Carry this virtue along with you wherever you go. If you do so, you are contributing to lay the foundation for a united Sri Lanka which respects diversity.



Principal of Passara Tamil Maha Vidyalaya

As said by Napoleon Bonapart if something needs to be started it should be started from the school. Students who participated for this Camp have realized the gruesomeness of war. Grooming a noble mind from the childhood period is the only way to eradicate poverty and fear of war.

It was the Camp held at Anuradhapura Walisinghe Harishchandra Vidyalaya. The students and teachers of Passara Tamil Maha Vidyalaya and Lunugala Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya reached Walisinghe Harishchandra Vidyalaya in the evening, when thousands of eyes filled with hope were impatiently waiting for the arrival of their fellow invitees.

The National Flag, the flag of the membership centre and the flag of Inter-Community Student Exchange Programme were hoisted followed by the welcome of guest invitees.

After religious observances Mr. Lionel Guruge, co-ordinator outreach unit (CPA) explained the objectives of the Inter-Community Student Exchange Programme.

Subsequent to the vote of thanks given by the Director-Education of Anuradhapura Sector and Mr. Nishantha Ramanayake, President of Samadeepa Social Centre, the students were given the opportunity to watch a children's film.

The second day of the Camp started-off with fitness exercises as usual. The field trip began after breakfast. The student groups were able to observe the lifestyles of Kukulawa, Rota Wewa, Katupotha, Ashokapura, Rambewa Para and Yaya Deka area people during their Field Trip. After returning to school and having lunch Mr. Gunasekara Gunasoma, a Researcher of Folklore, made his presentation under the theme of 'Identifying and experiencing diversity by studying folk culture'.

A group of 38 students with creative skills were given the training on 'how to compile a good Newsletter' at a brief workshop session conducted by C. Dodawatte former editor Dinamina, and Rasika Manobuddhi and Ravi Chandralal (Journalists)

Around 2.30 p.m the students were given the opportunity to engage in sports activities. They were also given the chance to enjoy a soakin the cold water of Nuwara Wewa. The cultural show began around 6.30 p.m. The School Band escorted the guest invitees who came to see the show to the main hall. This show was a unique opportunity for the students to perform their creative talents.

Third day of the Camp also started off with fitness exercises.

The students were assigned to make notes of their Field Trip. After planting memorial trees the Student Groups gathered at the main hall to present their Field Trip observations and experiences.

As the final phase of the final day, subsequent to few brief speeches, the National Anthem was sung in both languages, concluding the Camp.





A Noble Programme



**Deputy Principal of
Harischandra Vidyalaya**

We had the opportunity to experience such a great Programme due to the involvement of Mr. Vipula Thilakaratne, Head of Sinhala Section. I'm about to retire and I feel sad because I never got the opportunity to participate in such

Programmes. But I am happy that I was lucky to get this opportunity.

in estate shanties are facing a lot of difficulties in their day-to-day lives and we feel so sad about it. Their sadness became our sadness after experiencing their lives.



The bond of brotherhood

Nisanka Dulanjalie

Anuradhapura Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya

We welcome our Tamil colleagues with all our love. Words are not enough to express the feeling within my heart. We didn't know about the lifestyles of people living in Badulla. We got that opportunity because of this Programme. People living

It was a beautiful experience for us when you came to our school from estate areas. People of Nuwara Kalawiya are facing similar difficulties that you face in Badulla. Nuwara Kalawiya people have to go miles in search of water. They don't have pipelines – so they haven't got water as well. Children are too poor to go to school and parents don't have proper jobs.

You have hope but these people don't. They are suffering from the war situation. Yet we were able to develop strong friendships amidst all these bitter experiences and I wish for an everlasting bond with them.



Field Trip to Anuradhapura Kukulewa area.



A dance performance – cultural show of the Camp held at A/Zahira Vidyalaya

Camp held at Zahira Vidyalaya, Anuradhapura



A Great Programme

Mr. Berty Premalal Dissanayake

Honourable Chief Minister of North Central Province

As the Minister of North Central Province, it is my responsibility to provide proper education opportunities to all Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim children living in this area. I treat all of them equally in providing those facilities.

These students are very lucky to have this opportunity; they had the space to share their ideas and to live with co-existence. Thus I give my blessings to this Programme.

The Mirror Wall

Beautiful

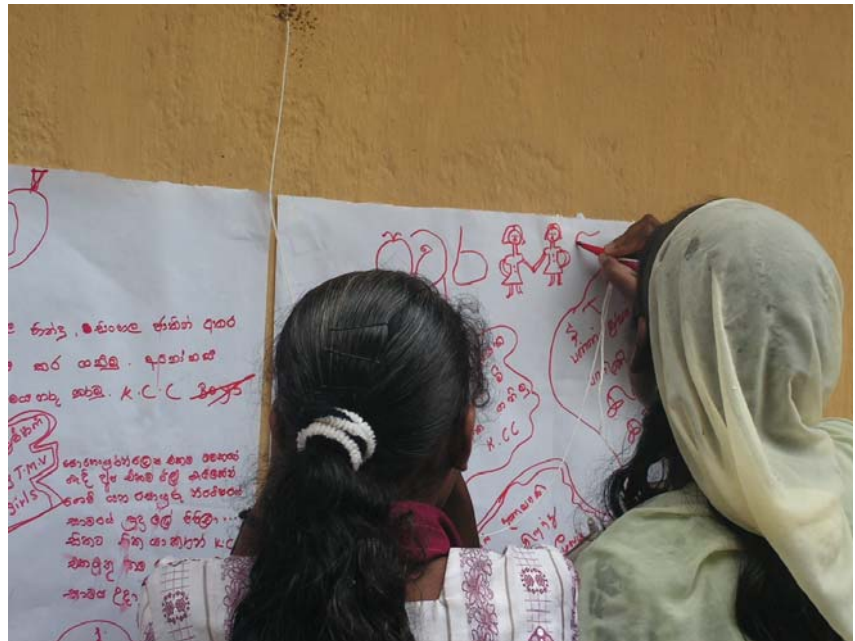
The living conditions of estate sector people are so hard
But the experiences we got are great
K.C.C. Boys

A wish

Love to live like this forever
K.C.C

Undying Memories

dear Tamil friends
we felt your compassion
these three days
and these memories will never be erased
Sunil, K.C.C.



Adding notes on friendship

Everlasting Peace

Let us wish for everlasting peace
giving an end to this war
Vajira
12 Arts, K.C.C.

Like stars in the sky

Like waves of the sea
Friendships will last forever in this world
Saman, K.C.C.

Badulla Zarnia Vidyalaya

The cold breeze
The resonance of birds
Enchanting
Like flowers blossomed in grassland
Shining together



Scribbling for the Mirror Wall

The Mirror Wall

Oh how beautiful it was
 The life in this Camp
 New comrades whom I met
 Will live in my heart
 Forever
 With undying friendship

The Pigeons

Let us fly ahead like a flock of pigeons
 with no difference
K.C.C

A River

Let us flow together
 Like a limitless river
K.C.C. Boys



A student adding her thoughts at Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya

Responsibility

Solidarity and unity is power
 It is our responsibility to protect
Lakmali
 (MO/B/S/K/V)

Same Path

Flowers we are
 In search of space to blossom
 The only way to escape
 From the racist devil
 Is to move ahead
 Step by step
 In the path of peace
Niluka
 Monaragala Madi Viduhala.



Adding a note of camaraderie to the Mirror Wall

The Losers

If the lives of Tamil brothers and
 sisters



The Mirror Wall

Are taken away from them by the war?
If the lives of Sinhala brothers and sisters
Are taken away from them by the war?
Is it victory?
They are the brothers and sisters of this nation, Sri Lanka
So, aren't we all losers?



A student scribbling her thoughts on Mirror Wall

The Fragrance

Flowers blossomed
Spreading its fragrance
All over the world
Sujani Upeksha, Ayeshini
10 - 2

The summer

The autumn took away the summer
Amidst burning flames
A new smile
A new inspiration
By your presence
Siridaran Pradeep Mano Loga
Year 4
P.I.M.V. (N.S)



Just before saying 'good bye'

Another Step

The burning flames of a ruthless war
Burns our hearts
Why? These racial flames
Rifting Sinhala and Tamil
For sure we will
Take another step
To heal this nation again
Darshika Sudarshani
Kusum Kalhari
Dinisha Roshini

The Mirror Wall

Year 12

Uhana Maha Vidyalaya, Ampara

Make to shine

The past was a tear in pain
 Due to a war of racial spirits
 We will make the future shine
 Leaving the past in the hands of past

Janaka Thusitha Bandara

Am/Galahityagoda Maha Vidyalaya

The chilly mountain breeze

Light of the moon in the night
 Does not seperate
 The North
 The South
 The Mountains
 Neither bothered by racial spirits
 The water falling down from
 waterfalls
 Does not care about low or high
 pinnacles
 Nature is equal to all of us
 Like the wind – let us blow
 Like the moonlight – soothingly cold
 Let us mark the end
 Of the battle

Chandana Pushpakumara

Am/Uhana Maha Vidyalaya

Never Withered

In a journey



A student adding beauty of her thoughts to the Mirror Wall at Ba/Zarniya Vidyalaya



The Mirror Wall

In search of flowers blossomed in a
chilly grassland
I felt love and compassion from you
Something I never felt before
Two days in the camp
Gone with the wind
So may I bid adieu
My beloved brothers and sisters
Your love
Will always
Be in my heart
It will never wither
Anusha Nilomi
Am/Rajagalathanna Maha vidyalaya



Autographing beautiful memories prior to departure

Mountain of Life

All hopes
Unexpectedly withered
Smile of a face
Was a teardrop in life
If your innocent heart
Is unsullied forever
Smile amidst tears
For sure you will
Conquer
G.K. Indika Kumudini
Am/Uhana Maha Vidyalaya

Happiness

The love blossomed in your heart
Is stronger than the sea
Even the empty sky
Felt a tear of happiness
With the love of Tamil and Sinhala
brothers and sisters



The Mirror Wall

Chandana Pushpakumara

Am/Uhana Maha Vidyalaya

This relationship will never fade off
The friendship will never be old
We are the summer came from faraway

Nandani, Norwood Vidyalaya

If you want to live with happiness
Unite.

Yashidaran

Would you like give what I want?
Do I like to give what you want?

I want peace
Will I get that from you?

Nashliya, Bloomfield Vidyalaya

Even though longstanding friendships have scattered
How long will this friendship live?

S. Padma, Bloomfield Vidyalaya

Let us be like flowers of summer

Suba- Ganeshan

You have to go in search of peace

Peace won't come in search of you

Yogendran – Tamil Vidyalaya

Peace is like our breath

If we lose it – we will die

G. Loka

Love
Which we give and receive
Peace
Which we don't have – neither we receive

Anton

If love blooms in all hearts
There would be peace

S. Julie

I dont know who gave the koel it's sweet voice
But I do know I learnt about peace from Zarnia

Yogarajah





Love

During the days
Spent in this beautiful village
Surrounded by mountains
I felt the beauty of life
The bond of friendship
Grew in our hearts
Peace and unity was so strong
Love has bloomed to
Keep us together

**A student from Anuradhapura
Walisinghe Harischandra Vidyalaya**

Respect Towards Diversity

Gunasekara Gunasoma

Folklore Researcher on Sinhala and Tamil Cross-Cultures

Diversity is a unique concept, which should be tolerated and appreciated. The society has immense diversity as much as the nature. There is no survival for those who disregard diversity. Panampattuwa is an area, which could be considered as a unique example for inter-cultural behaviours. Even though that inter-cultural relationship is scattered today, it used to be an area where many communities lived with co-existence in the past. All the people who used to live in that area were able to articulate in Sinhala as well as Tamil. They were committed to protect those cultural norms. But unfortunately this ideal condition was distorted due to the 1983 'black July' insurgencies.