

Catalyzing Change

August 2018

This issue focuses on increasing the voice and participation of women and youth.

Our Board

Chrysalis is governed by a Board of Directors comprising three Sri Lankan personalities and one expatriate representative from CARE USA.

In this issue of the newsletter, we introduce Nelun Chrisanthi (Chris) Gunasekera, one of our board members and will feature the others in the next editions.

After 12 years with the Asian Development Bank Sri Lanka Resident Mission as the gender and social development specialist, Chris is now an independent gender and social development consultant. Having worked as a consultant for CARE International, Chris subsequently conducted gender sensitization training for the staff of two CARE Sri Lanka projects.

Having been on the CARE Advisory Board during the transition period, we felt it opportune to feature her as our first guest in this column.



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“ I was really happy to be invited to be a Board Member, partly because of my long association with CARE but mainly because I had seen the process of transition being planned and executed. I recall an interesting time when they started working with the private sector, which was a survival strategy no doubt, but one which I viewed as a very smart move to not depend only on conventional donor funding. It showed that the organization was evolving and securing a niche for itself in the country's development future. Chrysalis is the outcome of that process of transformation - an evolution - and it's exciting to be on the board of this new entity.

At the ADB I was exposed to working in different hard sectors like transport and energy, in which an issue like gender is not easy to address or integrate. But throughout my tenure I have seen how these sectors opened up to include gender issues in their operations and with this wealth of knowledge I believe I can contribute to Chrysalis' work.

In relation to finding its place in the development community, Chrysalis needs to respond to different situations at that time and in the particular context. Chrysalis has elements of both the private sector and the not for profit sector. As an organization Chrysalis has to be very clear about what its objectives are and work hard to stay within the parameters of our vision and mission.





One in three women worldwide is beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused, mostly by her male intimate partner
(WHO, 2013 & UNODC, 2013)



Counting the Cost: The Price Society Pays for Violence against Women



Figure 1 - Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala,
Credits - Prathap Kumaraperuma



Figure 2 - Zainab Ibrahim,
Credits - Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala



Figure 3 - Jay Goulden,
Credits - Chandra Prasad, CARE Int'l

The report, **“Counting the Cost: The price society pays for violence against women,”** draws on studies from 13 different countries of the world and presents the economic costs of Violence Against Women (VAW) in relation to national economies. This report estimates that VAW costs society more than 2% of global GDP, and states that the problem is serious in low, middle and high income countries alike. Three of the case studies were conducted by CARE which looked at intimate partner violence in Bangladesh and Zambia and sexual harassment in the workplace in Cambodia.

Survivors bear the highest financial costs but States bear costs in service delivery to victims while the private sector pays for reduced productivity.

The actual cost of violence against women greatly exceeds the cost of prevention. For example, in Uganda, implementing the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act of 2010 for both prevention and response to domestic violence was estimated at just over US\$ 8 million over three years while the cost of violence against women was estimated at US\$ 30.7 million for just one year. The report recommends actions for governments, donors, and the private sector to prevent and respond to violence against women.

These recommendations include increased resources, support for women’s and grassroots movements, and implementation of laws. A specific recommendation to the private sector also includes the development of advertisements that challenge gender stereotypes instead of perpetuating them, thereby leading to the creation of new norms which respect equality and diversity amongst men and women, boys and girls.



The report was authored by Chrysalis Consultants Zainab Ibrahim and Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala (Co-Leads of the Global Working Group on the ‘Life Free from Violence Outcome’, on behalf of the CARE International Secretariat) and Jay Goulden, Knowledge Management and Learning Coordinator, CARE International Secretariat.

Even women with rhinoceros skin are not above patriarchal norms



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Although the 25% quota for women is a milestone for grassroots women like me, our politics is being completely driven in a patriarchal political setting where family connections, especially the charisma of a male relative trumps gender prejudice when it comes to females' political ascension

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Forty-year-old Kalaichelvi, a cadjan weaver by profession, is passionate about public service and the community's common good. She feels privileged to have been a beneficiary of the Network, Engage and Transform (NET) Project, which sought to promote the voice and meaningful political representation of women in Northern Sri Lanka to prevent and address Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV). She believes that the trainings brought out her hidden potential and encouraged her to enter local politics through a party whose ideology aligned with hers.

Due to her immense popularity, she was welcomed with open arms and nominated for the First List. But to her dismay, she discovered that her candidacy was expunged and replaced by a male candidate on the day before the nomination deadline. To add insult to injury her replacement was fundamentally unfit for the profound responsibilities he sought.

The NET project supported by the European Union and CARE Deutschland- Luxemburg e.v. seeks to promote the voice and meaningful political representation of women in Northern Sri Lanka to prevent and address Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGBV).

The project was also linked to a nation-wide advocacy campaign led by the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Governance and the Ministry of Women's Affairs to fulfil the recent change in the Electoral Act that ensures a 25% quota for women in local governing bodies.

However, relentless in her fight for justice, Kalaichelvi was finally nominated for the Proportional Representation (PR) list with the promise that she would be elected to the Council through the mandatory party quota for women. The PR list refers to an electoral system in which the percentage of seats won by a given political party in a legislative election corresponds to their share of the vote. Sadly our political culture is so strongly set in patriarchal overtones that even the women's quota has failed to defy the standard political narrative. Yet, she has been a part of the political typecast in making that effort and continues her social engagement as the President of the Women's Cooperative Society.

Story contributed by Priyakala Manoharan

To this extent, the NET project facilitated the increased political representation of women leaders in local governance in Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu.

The project culminated in an event which drew together project participants, donors and stakeholders in Colombo recently. The 36 men and women who contested the elections were felicitated at the event.



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From grass roots actions to policy influence

Chrysalis is working with the Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government in order to establish a community governance model and support infrastructure with relevant local organizations to ensure training, skills development and implementation of the state language policy. 540 Public sector officials and over 1200 community leaders have participated in skills development events and eventually prepared Village Development Plans (VDP). The amalgamation of VDPs at the local authority level, will be facilitated by Divisional Steering Committee, to be reflected in the local government annual action plans and budgets.

Over a year, consultations were held with community, civil society and state staff to identify the existence of policies and practices related to women in the Uva and Central provinces. Even though women's issues are not a devolved subject, each province has women's ministries coupled with other decentralized subjects. There have been attempts by Civil Society to formulate women's policies or similar documents to enshrine processes and practices which enable women's empowerment.

However, the lack of political will and of female leadership, among other reasons stemmed these efforts. On some occasions administrative barriers of the 13th amendment were put forward to stall the processes. Since its establishment, the National Women's Charter faced barriers for implementation at sub national levels. In May 2018, Chrysalis brought together senior level officers from Central and Uva provinces to draft action plans to implement the relevant sections of the Charter.



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School children observing a village development planning session

Officers from the North-Western Province also participated and shared their experiences. The draft plan included Equality, Sensitivity, Inclusivity, Non-discrimination and Learning and Capacity building under the principles. Prevention of Gender Based Violence, strengthening implementation of policies and laws, equal access and control over productive assets, strengthening women's political participation and equality in domestic sphere were identified as key thematic engagements. Several actions are proposed under each theme targeting state and other stakeholders. Chrysalis will work in collaboration with the Central and Uva provinces to institutionalize the action plans during this year.



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Communities engaged in making Village Development Plans



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Strength lies in differences not in similarities



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“This country can only develop through its diversity. Diversity is an important resource which should be utilized for our own benefit. While we respect our own identity, we should always respect the identity of others”

*- Zonal Director of Education -
Gallallegama Ganaseela Thero*

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Two dramas with the story ideas presented by students went on boards at two schools in Anuradhapura and Kilinochchi in June. Chrysalis' partner the Janakaraliya Cultural Foundation carried out a drama training for 42 students from the two districts and this resulted in two bi-lingual dramas being produced. Several students shared their experiences on what it meant to be a part of a drama team that uses Art as a tool for social cohesion.

The topic of diversity and its importance was also discussed in the form of a Talk Show, among the audience of Senior government officials, Principals, parents, teachers and students. The YOUth Create project as part of its global Students Rebuild Challenge aims to

enable a new generation of peace-builders across diverse communities in the North and South of the country to strengthen the peace and reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. The project engages students from schools and children clubs in the districts of Anuradhapura and Kilinochchi. The initiative utilizes the power of performing arts to foster sustainable collaboration between youth who have been separated by conflict, culture and belief systems.

The final event of the YOUth Create project was held at the Western Province Aesthetic Resort (NADA) on the 24TH of August in collaboration with the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation.



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The students during a drama rehearsal

Kajeny - Couldn't be happier..



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When her father passed away soon after she left school, Kajeny's life took a different turn. Although she had done well in school her future was uncertain. Desperate to study further, she could not afford to but then again securing a job was hard.

Kajeny lives with her mother and a brother with special needs, in Mullaithivu, one of the worst war affected areas in the North of Sri Lanka. The family's irregular income is derived from a coconut land, leaving them heavily dependent on relatives to cover their brother's medical needs and household expenses.

Like thousands of others in the Northern Province, Kajeny's family too rose from the ashes of war, to rebuild their lives, communities and gradually even social activities. In 2016, she joined the St. Anthony's Community Centre (Praja Mandalaya) in Irranaipalai because of her interest in community work. A community centre is a recognized legal entity under the Pradeshiya Sabha Act. It was identified as a viable community governance model by the Department of Local Government.

Kajeny joined an extensive three-month training programme organized by Chrysalis and conducted by CAMPS International. *"As representatives of our villages, we were taught to be leaders, face challenges, manage stressful situations and lead a team from our respective Community Centre in Puthukkudiyiruppu."*

“

What I have learned helped me to look at everything differently. I'm born and raised in a village. Our problems are common. The past several months showed me, how much an ordinary girl like me can achieve if only we have the access to right people, relevant knowledge and correct guidance

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The lead trainer made an interesting observation during the initial trainings: *"When I was assigning classroom exercises, Kajeny's presentation was analytical yet simple and clear. In group activities everyone looked up to her. In the village level exercises to prepare the Irranaipalai Development Plan, Kajeny coordinated the gathering of villagers. She keenly directed villagers when resource maps, social calendars, and stakeholder analysis were done. I saw someone more than a trainee in her".*

A year on, Kajeny couldn't be happier. Recruited as a Training Facilitator by CAMPS International, she went on to work as a Project Officer in a non-governmental organization. Today she holds a Government job as Management Assistant at the Mullathivu District Secretariat.



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Kajeny engaged in a presentation