

Annual Report 2014-15



Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF)

Annual Report

2014/15

“It’s very unfortunate that the potential of children and youth in making positive social change in the society, often has not been acknowledged by many elders. As a result, children with enormous ability to transform attitudes, behaviors and skills take long time to realize that they are one of the prime stakeholders in the society”

Wimal Gunarathne,
Director, Department of Education, Western Province

Contents

1. Chairperson's Message/ 05
2. Vision, mission and governance/ 06
3. Radio Drama Program/ 09
4. Sri Lanka Forum Theatre Program - Phase II/ 11
5. Creative Expressions through Storytelling/ 12
6. Community Radio Consultation/ 13
7. Islamic Framework on Gender Equality and Justice/ 14
8. Financial Report/ 16

01. Director's Message

The year 2014 has been yet another effective year for Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF) especially of being able to implement three more successful interventions – Engaging youth on radio drama, Involving school children in Creative expression through storytelling Program and Sri Lanka Forum Theatre Program Phase II. SDJF further enhanced its capacity and proved its commitment to promote inclusion, pluralism and interfaith with the use of strategic media. Reaching more than 45,000 marginalized persons who do not find access and space within the mainstream media, was an achievement of SDJF.

With the progress, engaging youth for peace building and positive social change has now become a specific priority of SDJF. More than 135 youth were trained on using creative media for positive social change. Importantly, enhancing the ethnic diversity of its youth network has opened up new avenues for future interventions. In the year 2014, the direction of SDJF was focused on conceptualizing the idea of using media for transformation while establishing training programs on promoting values such as active non-violence, tolerance, pluralism and diversity.

With the first hand experience of hosting a radio drama program on promoting freedom of religion and religious pluralism, SDJF realized its scope in expanding the enhancement of media in strengthening reconciliation. Moreover SDJF has created learning opportunities for the local academicians to understand the modern trends of media education around the globe and to enhance the quality of media education in Sri Lanka. It's mandated that SDJF will work closely with local academic institutions during the next couple of years on this regard.

The comments and feedback received not only from the public but also from various scholars, and media encouraged SDJF to organize more programmes in the next year. I also take this opportunity to express my thankfulness to donors, partner organizations, consultants and staff for the support extended in 2014 while wishing the same in 2015.

M.C. Rasmin
Director, Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF)

**SRI LANKA DEVELOPMENT
JOURNALIST FORUM**
**#429, 2/1, Nawala Road,
Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka.**
Office : +94117209511/2877007
E-mail : info@ldjf.org
Web : www.ldjf.org

02. Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF)

Sri Lankan Development Journalist Forum (SDJF) is a well-established national level organization, with more than 7 years of extensive experience in promoting the role of media in democratization and positive social change. We work closely with Local and international media organizations, civil society organizations, child, youth and women movements, and other organizations committed to promote similar goals. SDJF has specialised knowledge and expertise in areas such as Media for Transformation, Community Media for Inclusive Development, and Training and Capacity Building while it considers Democracy, Equality, Social Justice, Diversity and Environment as their cross-cutting themes.



Vision

A country where media plays an accountable role promoting positive social change and democratic values

Mission

Be the leader in transformation with the use of media tools, strengthen community media, advocate democratic values and undertake training and capacity building.

Organizational Objectives

1. To advocate democratic values, including social justice and equality, through the use of media
2. To facilitate positive transformation and inclusive development by strengthening community media in Sri Lanka.
3. To build the capacity of youth and women to become positive change makers
4. To encourage the use of new technology to create a comprehensive macro environment for new media and accountability.

Thematic focus

01. Media for positive social change

Under this program, SDJF focus on activities which promote Gender Equality and Justice, child rights, Ethnic and Religious pluralism, Gender-sensitive active Non-violence (GSANV), democratic values, and creative problem solving approaches. Youth, children, women and unheard civil society are the direct beneficiaries of this programme area. SDJF is of the view that youth are active agents in positive social change, and therefore formed a youth network. Enhancing the skills of youth around creative tools such as arts, culture, sports, drama and media to facilitate positive social change is another priority under this program area.

Furthermore, mobilising the voices around violations of women and child rights, advocating related global conventions are given equal attention too. In the meantime, SDJF produces media content for several different media institutions in this program area.



02. Community Media for Inclusive Development

Addressing the voice poverty across the regions, inviting civil society to participate in the process of democracy and enhancing the community media sector are some of the activities carried out by the Forum under the program area called community media for inclusion. Promoting freedom of expression, communicational rights of the civil society, community media policy development, and media and information literacy are given an equal priority as well.



03. Training and Capacity Building

This is one of the core programme areas of SDJF which is interlinked with the above two program areas. Under this programme, SDJF focus on activities such as radio for social advocacy, Storytelling and social change, New media and participation, Youth and pluralism, Media and conflict transformation, media advocating child rights, Community broadcasting, Sport diplomacy and Arts and culture for transformation. SDJF has been training more than 300 youth on radio for social advocacy and more than 140 Youth on pluralism.



GOVERNANCE

SDJF is governed by an independent pool of experts – Board of Directors that is comprised with two senior academicians with extensive experience in media and transformation, a public service officer – expert in gender and administration and its founder member who is the director/CEO. The chairperson and co-chairpersons are the supreme authorities of the organizations. The policies and policy related decisions taken by board of directors are implemented by the executive director who is the founder member and fully answerable to the board.

Board has established a unique gender policy to ensure that SDJF follows the gender venues. The female board members have unquestionable authority to look at any ongoing and upcoming intervention to ensure that gender equality is not being compromised. At the same time, the board of directors is given equal authority to engage SDJF staff in the aspect of organizational management. However, policy related issues are dealt only with the supervision of chairperson and or co-chairperson. As far as finance and procurement is concerned, SDJF do have well established finance and procurement policy and organizational codes and it applies for all the staff including the founder member.



03. Promoting freedom of religion and religious pluralism

This was a unique and tailor-made effort of Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF) to engage a large amount (approximately 900) of civil society members along with 24 young talented radio drama writers participated in making stories on issues affecting Freedom of Religion and issues that hinder religious pluralism in their respective regions. Fascinatingly, nearly 50,000 people were attracted by the substance of the drama.

SDJF trained 24 young radio drama writers from different ethnic communities – Buddhist (8), Tamil (8) and Muslims (8) on the use of Radio drama as an effective medium, to promote freedom of religion, belief and religious pluralism and they were later engaged with large number of civil society members to produce 12 strong radio dramas highlighting these issues affecting freedom of religion, while advocating pluralistic values effectively.

This program included several numbers of activities.



“After attending the field visit I was able understand the unity among different ethnic groups. When I went to a Sinhalese house I was very scared and I had a fear of working with the Muslims. But after spending few days with them I realized that we can have a good relationship with people from other ethnic groups”

-Alogini Moses

“I don't think there is anybody like me who is so racist. I was 100% a racist. But after I participated in this program it completely. I believe that we all should get together and work as a one unit”

-Tharindu Wickremasinghe

01. Story Hunting

An innovative component of this intervention is the Story-Hunting visit. A process of selected writers visiting the target community and stay there for three days to interact with various stakeholders, primarily with the civil society members to gain a real world sense of the issue that is to be addressed in the drama. In addition, writers also hunt for different real world characters, plots, conflicts while understanding the people perception towards the issues and connected solution.

04. Community Storytelling

Community Storytelling is an event inviting community members to a convenient place to listen to the dramas, tell their stories, reflect and relate the drama with their own context, shaping the public perspective on the issue. Idea of this event is to encourage people to participate in reflection while creating awareness on issues affecting freedom of religion and religious pluralism. SDJF hosted 6 community storytelling sessions and more than 900 people participated in the process.

05. Radio Drama Airing

SDJF, in this initiative produced 12 dramas and those 12 dramas were aired through two community Radio stations reaching more than 20,000 people in the east and eventually, the values inbuilt in these dramas were promoted through online media and print media campaign that reached more than 30,000 direct beneficiaries. A wider out-reach was carried out by the SDJF to make people aware about the time of airing. Post production survey conducted by SDJF indicated that the dramas have contributed immensely towards interfaith reconciliation in both the provinces.

02. Story Fair

Story- Fair is a meeting of writers, who attended the story-hunting visit to market - sell - share the characters, plots, conflicts, triggers, observation, and information with each others. This story-fair is facilitated by a senior producer and all the potential ingredients that can increase the quality of drama will be finalized. The basic idea of both the activity is to bring the perspectives of people and real world experiences into the drama.

06. Dramas in Social Media

To create a wider awareness about religious pluralism and freedom of religion SDJF uploaded the Radio Drama in to the SDJF You Tube channel as well as to the SDJF Facebook page. This was done mainly to create an interactive space to augment future activism on religious pluralism in other communities.

03. Community Story Board Meetings

Once the initial draft scripts were developed in the workshop, these stories were given to community storyboard members - a pool of civil society members (nearly 45), representing a cross-section of the society. Purpose of community storyboard meeting was to invite civil society and the original writers to go through scripts together to offer their comments and make sure the draft scripts are reflecting their society. In this activity people are allowed to give suggestions as to add or drop certain elements from the scripts.



04. Sri Lanka Forum Theatre Program - Phase II

Sri Lanka Forum Theatre Program - Phase II aimed at promoting a culture of non-violence and tolerance. It reached approximately 45,000 people from Trincomalee, Polonnaruwa, and Kandy districts of which 15,000 of the participants directly participated in the performances. SDJF organized this program in partnering with the Central, North Central and Eastern Province Education Departments and Ministry of Education.

36 young artists who belong to diverse ethnic groups namely, Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim were selected, and created 20 strong Forum scripts to promote non-violence and tolerance, after attending a professional training workshop on the use of forum theatre to promote non-violence. Eventually, these 20 scripts were performed in 30 schools in above districts.

The young forum activists were given an opportunity to present their creativity, and to bring out their positive ideas to shape mass perspective on non-violence, while generating a space for ac-

tive dialogue with the public. 95% of the youth believed that the training workshop contributed to gain professional skills and knowledge needed to transform their perception into a positive direction to facilitate tolerance and active non-violence in their region.



The program also contributed in creating an interactive atmosphere for the people from Buddhist, Tamil and Muslim ethnic backgrounds where they were able to develop non-violent and peaceful values, which could further enhance

tolerance, in collaboration with the forum theatre members.

In addition, the community members also actively engaged in dialogues creating the timely strategies that could be utilized in solving issues related to religious tolerance through peaceful means. Further, the community members also brought out such strategies by acting jointly with the young performers.

Among the 15,000 direct participants 61% were females and 39% were males. Regarding the ethnicity ratio, there were 38% Muslims, 33% Sinhalese and 30% Tamils. Over 75% of the participants mentioned that the values and the performances in the forum theatres are highly relevant to their personal and social lives. Moreover, 64% noted that they were able to internalize all the values which were discussed in these dramas. The other significant fact is 84% of the population also mentioned that the discussion on religious pluralism is very timely and appropriate.

tion also mentioned that the discussion on religious pluralism is very timely and appropriate.

05. Creative expressions through storytelling

Creative Expression through Storytelling was an intervention designed and implemented by Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum with the view of building the capacity of young school children on creative expression.

Storytelling gives young students the freedom to imagine a world they like very much to live in and further to bring their alternative expressions on anything that they think is essential to them; their society and their country. Storytelling is known as a potential medium of critical thinking and shaping the personality of young students to tell their own stories. Storytelling inspires young students towards effective free expression which is one of their fundamental rights.

This program was successfully concluded in Colombo and Kalutara districts under the supervision of the Western province Education Department. 36 student writers were capacitated and two collections of stories written in both Sinhala and Tamil were launched as a result.



06. A National Consultation on Community Radio

A National Consultation on Community Radio in Sri Lanka was organized by Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF), with the support of Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) office in Delhi, and in partnership with the Ministry of Media and Information, and Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) on the 07th of February, at Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Colombo. The purpose of the consultation was to bring back the dialogues on Sri Lanka's Commu-

nity Radio movement with a focus group of key stakeholders, to identify ways and means for future engagements with policy makers. It also aimed to engage stakeholders to identify key issues that affect the development of Community Radio in Sri Lanka.

Selected participants came from The Trincomalee Campus, Sri Palee Campus – University of Colombo, Engineering faculty – University of Ruhuna, University of Kelaniya and The Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

There were agents from government departments, such as the Department of Agriculture and the Sri Lanka Mahaweli Authority and also few journalists as well. The workshops gave the participants a hands on experience in using open access software, a step by step guide to installing Ubuntu and GRINS, a software that would help them operate web radio. At the end of the three day workshop, the participants had set up their own dummy web radio.

A total of 15 participants, including the Secretary to the Ministry of Media and Information, Mr. Karunaratne Paranavitharana, veteran Community Radio expert and the former Director of UNESCO's International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC), Mr. Wijenanda Jayaweera, Dr. Ankuran Duta, Programme Officer at CEMCA, New Delhi, civil society members, academics and regional radio stations of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.



07. Developing an Islamic Framework for Equality and Justice (IFEJ)

The Islamic Framework on Gender Equality and Justice (IFEJ) is the final outcome of the six overall interventions on ‘Developing a framework for Equality and Justice,’ implemented by Sri Lanka Development Journalists Forum. The intervention included 10 days of training for selected 24 Muslim Religious Leaders (MRLs) on explaining the real teachings of the holy Quran and Shari’a (the Islamic Law) in Gender Equality and Justice. This training strictly followed a curriculum, which was developed by SDJF with the support of experts in that field.

The training was crucial in the teaching and learning the history of these rules in Sri Lanka for two reasons: one is that for the first time MRL from different schools of thought successfully worked together in explaining the teachings of Islam in a common societal concern. Two, is that the topic of Gender Equality and Justice – which has been neglected, ignored and not recognized as an important social discourse to be explained - was taken in for an in-depth discussion for the first time.

Despite the fact that the IFEJ needs the review by professionals and activists to make it as a good reference that can be used in the public domain, it can be used for different purposes such as advocacy, teaching, training and further studies. Community workers, activists, journalists, universities, madrasas and MRLs can also use it in their field. Other activists of this intervention+ need to publicly debate on Gender Equality and Justice and other key issues such as GBV, domestic violence, legal discrimination, issues affecting Muslim women in the Quazi court process, women’s social mobilization and social statuses. This intervention has created a new paradigm where issues that affect Muslim women is accepted as an issue that needs open minded thinking. Also there is a visible expectation in the community about the IFEJ.

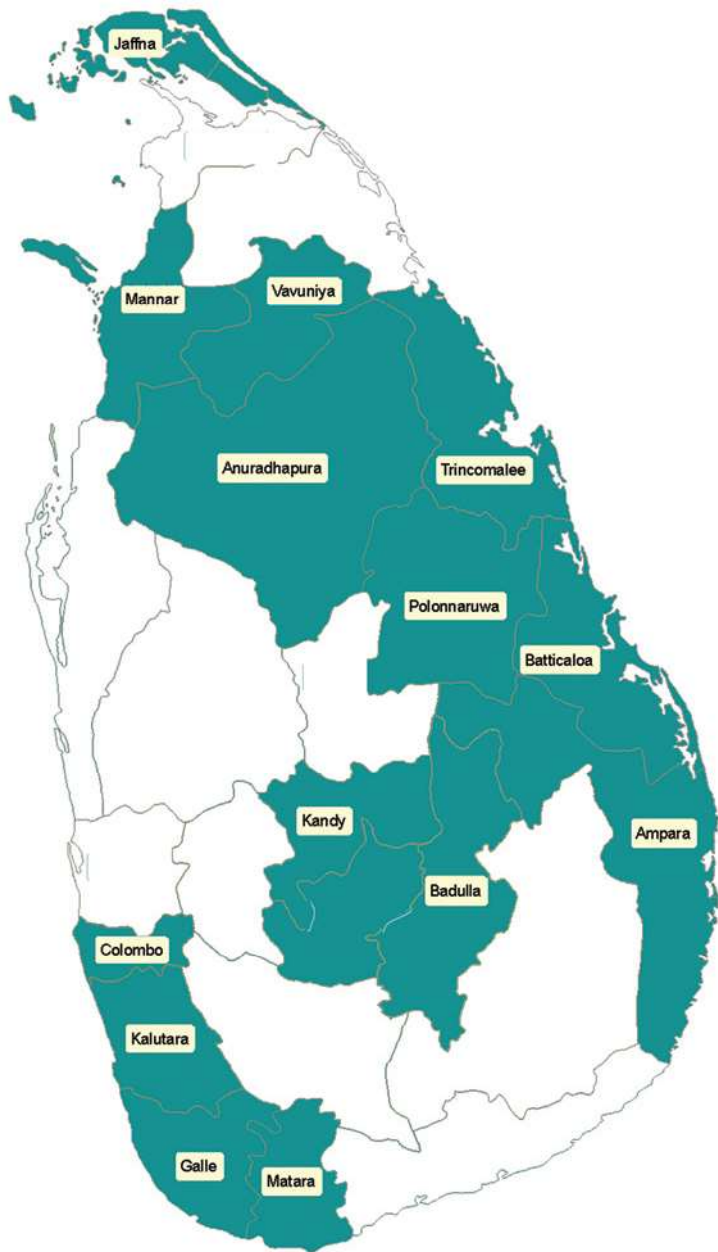


This program directly benefitted 854 people of which 311 females (36.4%) and 543 males (63.5%) of which 588 (68.8%) were youth under the age of 29. Of this, 251 were female youth while 337 were male youth.

This project was conducted in 15 locations in 4 districts; Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara. In Anuradhapura the project was conducted in Angunochiya, Horowpathana, Anuradhapura town and Kahata-gasthiviliya, in Trincomalee - Kanthale, Muthur and Kinniya, in Batticaloa - Kathankudy, Oddamavadi, Mancholai and Semmanoda and in Ampara - Sainthamaruthu and Sammanthurai.



WHERE WE WORK



www.ldjf.org

We are partnered with:

Ministry of National Language and Social Integration
The Ministry of Mass Media and Information
Department of Education, UVA province
Department of Education, Western Province
Department of Education, Northern Province
Department of Education, Central Province
Department of Education, Eastern Province
Department of Education, North Central Province
Ministry of Education, Eastern Province
Ministry of Education, Central Province
Ministry of Education, North Central Province
Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLB)
Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLF)
Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)

We are working with:

University of Peradeniya
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
Eastern University of Sri Lanka
Trincomalee Campus
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

SDJF is connected internationally with:

International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
Commonwealth Media Educational Centre for Asia (CEMCA)
South Asia Network for Community Media (SANCOM)
Women Peace Makers Program (WPP)
Global Association for Media and Gender (GAMAG)
The South Asian Network to Address Masculinities (SANAM)
World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)