



## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers around the world,

This is our maiden effort to reach you through our official newsletter. This is a quarterly newsletter. It is through the hard labour of our staff that the Newsletter took its final form. It is my prime duty to thank all of them especially the volunteers for their strenuous effort and unlimited interest in the growth of the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation as well as of the beneficiaries of our country. Amid encircling of uncertainty, fears and doubts about the future of our country (whether war would break out) the Centre has taken steady steps to be involved in peace building activities.

Fr. J. J. Bernard OMI

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## THE THEME

**“Towards Peace and Reconciliation through Non-violent Means” –  
Peace Week for the First Time in Jaffna  
15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2005**

**September 21 – The International Day of Peace.**

It was for the first time that the Jaffna Peninsula had a grand Peace Week celebration commemorating the International Peace Day. The week was organized by the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in Jaffna to awaken the people to express their longing and aspiration for peace.

We had four different significant events during the Peace Week. These events were:

- Peace Week Competition
- Peace Day Budes Distribution
- Peace Talks
- Peace Day Cultural Program

### **Peace Week Competition**

The Centre conducted Essay Competitions at the school level. Adults too were encouraged to participate in other competitions like Poems and Posters. The Main purpose was to make the people aware of the need for peace and Reconciliation. We strongly believe that art and literature play a key role in bringing about peace and reconciliation in a conflict and post conflict situation. This has been the experience of several countries.

The total number of the participants in this peace week competition was 235. Even after the closing date, we received some essays, poems and posters. Our Volunteers did the initial ranking scanning work and the scanned materials were sent to persons with authority in the particular literatures. They did the final ranking and chose the first three places. Rev. Fr. Poncian OMI ranked the essays, Mr. Alagarasa ranked the Poems and Mr. Rudolf Fankhauser and Mr. Judeson (Modern Artist) ranked the posters. The names of the winners were published in Uthayan,



Eezhanadu and Valampury - the local News Papers. Prizes were distributed to all winners during the cultural programme in the Centre for Performing Arts (CPA) on the final day of the Peace Week.

### **Peace Day Budes Distribution**

During the peace week, the centre printed 150000 peace day budes and distributed to all the schools in Jaffna peninsula. 'Towards Peace and reconciliation through non-violence means' was the motto of the peace week declared by the CPR. The motto and the logo of the International Peace day were imprinted on the budes. All the school students wore the budes on the International Peace Day. The Budes were distributed with the approval of the Zonal Directors of Education. The Volunteers were directly involved in distributing the budes to all the schools in Jaffna and Valigamam Educational Zones. In Vadamaradchi, Thenmaradchi and Island Educational zones the budes were distributed through the Director of Education.

### **Peace Week Peace Talks**

From 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September, Peace talks were organized by the Centre in the evening. Relevant topics/themes were treated by resource persons from Jaffna University.

### **Cultural Programme**

It was quite appropriate to celebrate the peace day in Jaffna on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2005. As the highlight of the Peace Week celebration the centre organized a cultural program in the Centre for Performing Arts to mark the International Peace Day. Dances, Action Songs, Traditional Cultural programmes were staged by school children, the "Kalabavanam" dance centre and the Centre for Performing Arts. Mrs. Shanthini Sivanesan was the Chief Guest and Mr. Fankhauser was the guest of honour. The Chief Guest awarded the prizes to the winners. The Staff and the Volunteers of CPR committed themselves for the success of the Peace Week.

### **ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. "Strengthening the Local Capacities for Peace" – A Basic Training Programme in Peace Work for Everybody**

Having trained our volunteers first, we offer now a Basic Training Programme for interested people at the grass root level, for school children, learned, and the head and staff of Organizations. The purpose of the training is to create more awareness of violence in our society and to teach the techniques of personal conflict handling styles and communication skills.

We plan to offer this training to different target groups. The number of the participants will be sixteen. The goals are to get to know the really interested people, to make them aware of the actual conflicts in Jaffna society and to strengthen their own responsibility towards further development. We hope to win some of them as volunteers. Participation and meals will be free, and travel fares will be reimbursed. As many of the young people don't have an income, we plan to pay them for some special tasks, for example interviewing people in remote villages.

#### **2. Training on Non-Violent Communication (NVC)**

The Centre for Peace and Reconciliation conducted training programmes on Non-violent Communication from July 6 – July13, 2005. It was conducted for the Staff and the Volunteers. There were 30 participants.

The participants were grouped into three to produce three handbooks based on the training they had. The staff compiled the three hand books into one. Now the hand book is being corrected by the Resource Person, Rev. Fr. Antonypillai S. J. We have formed NVC groups to conduct training sessions for the people with the help of the handbook.



One of the volunteers summarizes the training on NVC.

“It is the modern communication skill to express oneself in a more successful way. I would like to exchange regularly life experience after this training.

**Jackal Way of Communicating:** Sometimes, we communicate at the head level. We are reasoning and arguing. We speak of what is right and wrong and at the end we pass judgement. We don't respect our feelings. We use the words: Must, should, have to... The result will be that we flee from the situation or we fight with others. This type of Communication creates conflicts and violence.

**Giraffe Way of Communicating:** The Giraffe has a long neck, sees the situations clearly and listens to others. It observes with broader vision. It shows concern with feelings. It searches for what helps us to grow here and now. It speaks an empathetic language.

In brief N.V.C has four elements: Observation, Feeling, Needs, and Request, to express one honestly and empathetically.”

### 3. DAYS OF OPEN DOOR

The purpose of this project is to introduce the centre to the neighbourhood, to build up relationships with them, to make them aware of the conflicts in the society and to motivate them to join us in the peace building work.

The project group with three main goals began its work from 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2005.

The goals are:

- ❖ The neighbours have a clear information about the centre and its mission
- ❖ They appreciate our goals, some support us in the peace work and there is a good relationship with us
- ❖ The awareness of conflict and peace situations is increased.

Our Centre had invited the neighbours on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. The project group for “Day for Open Door” did all the preparatory work for the day.

The cooperation and active participation of the volunteers and the support of the staff are commendable. We are encouraged to proceed with the project to convince people of the need for Peace and harmony.

### OUR PROJECTS & FUTURE PLANS

#### 5. Peace Education:

- Two Hours Programme for Primary Schools
- Handbook
- Children Parliament

The project “Peace Education in Primary Schools in Jaffna” was inaugurated on 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2005. This three-month project is based on the following three goals.

- We have a better knowledge of the students and the teachers in the two particular schools
- We have improved the unity among students and diminished the violent culture to a great extent.
- Members of the project group and some teachers are able to conduct some peace education programs.

Seven volunteers along with a staff have formed a project group to go forward with this project. We had a meeting with teachers at St. Charles Maha Vidiyalaya. They appreciated our project.

During Peace Week we conducted peace games at the Green Field Club on September 18, 2005 for more than forty five children.

Ground work to prepare a hand book on Peace education is underway. The Lecturers and Intellectuals of Jaffna University are with us to support this endeavour.

In order to sow and cultivate the seeds of democracy, equality, leadership and political interest among the children we would like to launch a massive project called “Children Parliament.” We are certain of commencing the Project in January 2006.



## 6. Human Rights Education

- Documenting Violations of Human Rights
- Establishing a Database System
- Human Rights Education

During the 20 years of civil war untold human rights violations have taken place in the North and East of Sri Lanka. No institution has dared to document them from the beginning of the war in a scientific manner. We dare, run risk and commit ourselves to the documentary work in order that the centre can turn out to be an early warning system by which it contributes to a reduction of velocity and volume of human rights violation and eradicates them in a long run. The victims are provided legal aid according to the gravity of the violations and the ability of the centre.

First we are focusing on the implementation of this project on a minor scale at the nearest GS division, at Chundikuli, in Jaffna.

The Project is based on the following three main concrete goals.

At the end of the project we want to reach:

- A documenting system including a database concerning the general life situation of the people in Chundikuli GS division.
- Knowledge of human rights violations.
- The foundation role of the centre as an early /pre warning system.

Actually, our project commenced on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 (Date of Beginning).

Our Achievements:

- Met the Chundikuli GS division Grama Sevagar and collected family details of Chundikuli GS division. 495 families are living there.
- We have divided the families into groups to be visited by our members for collecting details.

- We have prepared a data form sheet.
- We have conducted training to the project group members about how to deal with people based on NVC role of an interviewer.
- We have strengthened our motivation through explanation detailed of the whole Human rights issues
- We have received more information how to interview every family about the general life situation and explaining the general goals

These achievements give us an impetus to commit ourselves to this kind of work.

A live-in training session on Fundamental Human Rights is organized from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October to 3<sup>rd</sup> of November to train the staff and the volunteers to start human rights education programme in Jaffna Peninsula.

## 7. Peace Library:

- A New Tool of Knowledge Management
- Buildingup Consciousness

There should be a well equipped Peace library as a new partner of the Jaffna libraries network.

People (the Centre volunteers, professionals and all interested citizens) have a better access to Peace related information. Eventually more people are guided on their way to a more peaceful life and are motivated for self commitment in the societal Peace process. But how to do the right steps?

Without doubt: The first step may be to create a well planned buying list with **books, CDs, Games** for the different target groups such as children, students, adults of different intellectual levels. For professionals like teachers, priests, policemen, soldiers, group leaders and peace workers in general we will provide a good collection of working materials.

We plan to go also for our **own publications**. A booklet on NVC (Non-violent communication) is being prepared, and another planned project is a “Handbook on Peace Education” in collaboration



with the university lecturers and school teachers.

**Advertising for Peace campaigns** and specific publicity in the newspapers.

And also **Public Events**, i.e. for promoting a newly published book or a discussion on peace related issues such as non-violence, Human Rights and so on. Cultural programmes, expositions, peace talks, press conferences or even seminars are appropriate formats of this kind of modern libraries.

**New idea: A special Computer-working place for Peace research**

Imagine: There is a computer with internet access for contributing to Peace research. Everybody can come for reading all the filed Peace materials or even testing (Peace-) games or browsing for further information about Peace issues.

Everything should be saved and added to the growing database. Clear rules and qualified advice will be the factors of success.

### **Financing**

Money is needed for books, CDs and other working materials and the basic equipment for one computer workplace. Estimation for the establishment: 300.000 Rupees.

## **8. New Non-violent Peace Movement**

- **33 Volunteers as a Core Group**
- **Our Care-Taking Concept**

With the support and efforts of different groups and organizations we hope to gather them to strengthen a New Nonviolent Peace Movement. We are preparing a public event to discuss the actual chance for gaining everlasting Peace in our country.

## **9. Special Trainings for Core Team and Volunteers**

In two areas, our staff and the volunteers will receive special trainings in the coming months: 1. Based on the Charter of the United Nations and the general declaration of the Human Rights a

seminar will be conducted concerning all main sections of the Human Rights. Strengthening respect for Human Rights will be the one column of our work.

The other one is the Peace Education with the main subjects non-violent communication, conflict analysis and –transformation and participative methods of training and advising. For both areas we will invite local resource persons.

## **OUR SERVICE: CARING FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS**

### **History of Recruiting Our Volunteers**

Centre for Peace and Reconciliation having 32 Volunteers who were recruited from three Basic Training Seminars. After recruiting five staff members, the Centre sent the application letters to remaining applicants to incorporate them as Volunteers.

Based on the Common Meeting with all the applicants, nearly 40 applicants agreed to be Volunteers for one year. After the team building work and three weeks of preparatory work, our staff conducted three consecutive Basic Training Seminars on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seminar, the common meeting for Volunteers (Monthly Volunteers Meetings - MVM-01) was held on 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2005 at 3.30 pm at Thodarpagam. On this red letter day 32 Volunteers signed the contract and the contract was read out distributed to all.

## **NECESSITY OF THE VOLUNTEERS FOR OUR CENTER:**

Our Political Concept of Volunteering:  
“Strengthening the civil society through the contribution of the volunteers to fabric of their community”

The role of volunteers in rendering services, in advocating for vulnerable people, in campaigning for environmental causes is an essential part of a strong and free democracy. Volunteering concept should be promoted because it helps to guarantee freedom and democracy



## SHORT NOTES

### **Networking and Rebuilding of the Civil Society**

Monthly meeting of International NGOs: In Jaffna there are many International NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations) that are working for the amelioration of the economical, social and political situation. The Centre will support the founding and fostering of new local civil society groups and organizations and offer our service as net-worker and cooperation partners.

### **Grassroots Contacts**

To be a chief guest or a guest of honour is an ideal opportunity for a foreigner to come in contact with the local institutions and the ordinary people. In this mission our Senior Advisor participated at the Pre School Sports Meet in the Holy Family Convent as Guest of Honour, as chief guest at St. Patrick's College Playground for the Soccer Tournament 2005 "Peace through Sports" and last but not least on occasion of the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our neighbouring Green Field Community Centre. The speeches will be published on our coming website.

### **AGEH Regional Seminar in Indonesia**

All German Civil Peace Workers and their local counterparts from the Asian Region were invited to a common Seminar with the subject "Strengthening the Local Capacities for Peace." We received a new tool for identifying the connecting and dividing factors in a conflict situation. It was also helpful to share many similar experiences.

The most important discussion we personally had with colleagues from the Pax Christi Peace Centre in Bacolod / Philippines is the idea to begin a regular cooperation with our centre in Jaffna.

### **Our Website**

The domain [www.peacecentrejaffna.lk](http://www.peacecentrejaffna.lk) is created, we will work on the website in the next 4 weeks for providing the facilities for people to have

digital exchange of information from the South and the North of Sri Lanka as well as around the Whole world.

## WEB LINKS

- **Further Information about Peace Work:**  
[www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)  
(PC International Brussels)  
[www.paxchristi.de](http://www.paxchristi.de)  
(PC German Section)  
[www.omigen.org/jpic](http://www.omigen.org/jpic)  
(JPIC - OMI)
- Info about Sri Lanka  
[www.tamilnet.com](http://www.tamilnet.com) (News from Tamil view)  
[www.lankapage.com](http://www.lankapage.com) (News from Singhal. view)

## FOTOS from the Peaceweek



Boys are proud wearing the Peace day badge



Volunteers preparing the badges distribution to nearly 400 schools



Maybe she doesn't understand



Badges distribution: Volunteers went by three-wheeler to far distant villages



# THE CENTRE FOR PEACE & RECONCILIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 1

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2005



**Our banner: Peace week 15. – 21. September 2005 “Towards Peace & Reconciliation by nonviolent means”**



**Our Centre with flowers and Board**



**Peace programme for the children of the Greenfield Community Centre**



**Alfons facilitates the Peace Talk (from left: Lecturer, Alfons, Interpreter)**



**Fr. Bernard, Director of the Centre, talking with the participant children**



**Group work during the Peace Talk: How does the dowry system (women’s have to pay for marriage to the husbands family) violate the women’s Rights to marry?**



**Blind guiding exercise: To what extent Responsibility in guiding and Confidence in being guided?**



**Alfons gives the prize to the winner group of the children programme**



**Competition: Not that easy to find the best ones from 132 poems! Volunteers are reading, discussing and ranking, hours and hours!**



**Traditional welcoming by putting a sandalwood spot at the forehead of the guests and sprinkling rosewater.**



**Poster Competition: The jury at the final decision for the first, second and third place.**



**St. Patrick’s College primary school boys singing and dancing about Peace**



**Jaffna Holy Family Convent Kids showing Peace of the 4 religions**



**Our Volunteers song group presenting the Centre Peace Song**

**Thanks for your interest!!**