

Final evaluation for the TEAM Project

(TOUR - Team Outreach for Reconciliation)
Submitted to Search for Common Ground
By Nucleus Services Private Limited
May 2017



Search for
Common
Ground



Contact persons

For any questions concerning the contents of this report please contact:

Amina Yoosuf, Director, Nucleus Services Private Limited (Reg. No. PV93414)
309/33A George E De Silva Mawatha, Kandy Tel. 081 221 6460 Mob: 077 780 6239
Email: amina@nucleus.lk

Dave Maurice, Director, Nucleus Foundation (Reg.No.GA2001)
83C 1/1 Kandawatte Road Nugegoda Tel. 011 7204 218 Mob: 077 362 2222
Email: dave@nucleus.lk

Table of Contents

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
3. 1. INTRODUCTION	4
3.1. BACKGROUND.....	4
3.2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS.....	4
3.3. OBJECTIVES	5
3.4. METHODOLOGY	6
3.5. SAMPLING.....	7
3.5.1. PROFILE OF KEY INFORMANTS.....	8
3.5.2. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS OF THE SAMPLE SURVEY	9
3.6. DATA ANALYSIS.....	9
3.7. LIMITATIONS	9
4. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION:	10
4.1. RELEVANCE	10
4.1.1. HOW RELEVANT WERE THE PROJECT INTERVENTIONS IN FACILITATING THE PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION ACROSS ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, GENERATIONAL, AND GENDER DIVIDES IN SRI LANKA?.....	10
4.2. DID THE PROJECT TARGET THE RIGHT GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS WITH A RIGHT SET OF STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES?	12
4.3. HOW TIMELY WAS THE PROJECT INTERVENTION CONSIDERING THE CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN SRI LANKA?	14
4.4. HOW DID THE PROJECT ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT SENSITIVITY?.....	15
5. FINDINGS - EFFECTIVENESS	16
5.1. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.....	16
5.1.1. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT?	16
5.1.2. HOW HAS THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO INCREASING GREATER AWARENESS AMONG THE TARGET POPULATION IN THE SELECTED LOCATIONS ABOUT CULTURAL DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVENESS, AND LEADERSHIP?.....	22
5.1.3. HOW HAS THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS?	23
5.1.4. WHAT BEHAVIOR OR PERCEPTION CHANGES RESULTED FROM THE SIKKA TEAM DRAMA AT INDIVIDUAL/GROUP/SOCIETAL LEVEL	26
5.1.5. WHAT UNEXPECTED POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE RESULTS DID THE PROJECT LEAD TO?.....	29
5.2. PEACE EFFECTIVENESS.....	29
5.2.1. HAS THERE BEEN ANY INDICATION OF REDUCED STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES AT THE SOCIETAL LEVEL IN THE SELECTED LOCATIONS?	29
5.2.2. ARE THERE INDICATIONS TOWARDS A SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION THAT EMBRACES DIVERSITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT?30	
5.2.3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY INDICATION OF INCREASED COLLABORATION AMONG WOMEN AND YOUTH ACROSS DIVIDING LINES?	32
6. FINDINGS - COORDINATION	32
6.1. HOW WAS THE COORDINATION BETWEEN SFCG AND ITS STAKEHOLDERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT? .	32
6.2. WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES, IF ANY, AND HOW DID SFCG AND PARTNERS OVERCOME THEM?.....	33
7. FINDINGS - SUSTAINABILITY.....	36
7.1. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE AND RESPECT ACROSS DIVIDES AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT?.....	36
7.2. ARE THERE ANY INDICATIONS THAT THE PROJECT INITIATIVES MAY SURVIVE OR CONTINUE TO OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY AFTER THE PROJECT PHASE-OUT?.....	37
8. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	39

8.1. DEVELOPMENT AND AIRING OF TV SERIES.....	39
8.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES	39
8.3. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.....	40
8.4. OBSERVATIONS BY FIELD RESEARCH TEAM	42
8.5. FOLLOW UP AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	42
<u>9. ANNEXES.....</u>	<u>43</u>

List of tables and figures

List of tables

<i>Table 1: Tools of data collection & sample</i>	7
<i>Table 2: Planned vs achieved sample</i>	8
<i>Table 3: Number and percentage of respondents by district</i>	9
<i>Table 4: Improved relationships among different ethnic groups</i>	24
<i>Table 5: Contribution of outreach activities to reconciliation</i>	25
<i>Table 9: Challenges faced and how they were overcome</i>	35

List of figures

<i>Figure 1: Components under study</i>	6
<i>Figure 2: Relevance of outreach activities</i>	11

List of Acronyms

ACJU	All Ceylon Jamiyathul Ulama
AL	Advanced Level
CBO	Community Based Organization
DS	District Secretary
DS	Divisional Secretary
DSD	Divisional Secretariat Division
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GS	Grama Sevaka
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LKR	Lankan Rupees
LLRC	Lesson Learnt and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OL	Ordinary Level
ONUR	Organization for National Unity and Reconciliation
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SLU	Sri Lanka Unites
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TEAM	Team Outreach for Reconciliation
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOUR	Team Outreach for Reconciliation
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

1. Executive Summary

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has been working in Sri Lanka since 2011, supporting the process of building a peaceful culture. The project TEAM/TOUR (Team Outreach for Reconciliation) was implemented to produce and air the episodic TV series 'Team' (known as Sikka TEAM in Sri Lanka), which merges the global appeal of sport (Cricket) with drama to help transform social attitudes and reduce violent behavior. An abridged version of Sikka Team and small community grants were utilized to implement outreach activities in five Districts. The initiatives worked with women and youth to foster reconciliation and promote stronger inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships between communities.

The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the contribution of the project in reducing prejudices, stereotypes and misunderstandings across divides while promoting reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The evaluation focused on three components related to project's specific objectives: 1) Dialogue on reconciliation, 2) Shifting perception and 3) Outreach activities.

A mixed method approach was utilized for the evaluation. The evaluation included: 1) review of secondary information; 2) nine focus group discussions (FGDs) in project locations (in each District, youth groups were invited to one FGD, and women's groups were brought together for another); 3) thirty one key informant interviews (KIIs); 4) a sample survey of 395 participants of outreach activities and 150 from a control group; 5) five case studies; and 6) discussions with SFCG Sri Lanka. Since a viewership survey was carried out in 2016, the evaluation focused on outreach activities.

Main findings of the evaluation

Relevance: The project was found to be relevant and timely considering the current conflict dynamics in Sri Lanka. The change in government mid-project (in 2015) created a conducive environment in which concepts related to reconciliation could be discussed. The TV program and outreach activities contributed to creating essential awareness about the need for reconciliation. All ethnic groups were engaged and religious leaders were mobilized to promote understanding and acceptance.

Program effectiveness: The findings of the evaluation revealed that the project was quite effective in strengthening inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships, and in promoting peace-building and reconciliation in target project districts. Most project outcome and output indicators were achieved and outreach activities worked to increase awareness about cultural diversity, inclusiveness and leadership. These activities contributed to strengthening relationships between different ethnic and religious groups who were living and working in isolation from each other. Many of those interviewed said that the Sikka team drama raised awareness about the need for reconciliation, unity and working together. Some of those who viewed the program changed their perceptions about people from other ethnic and religious groups. While many saw the project activities in a positive light, a few cases were cited where community members were not receptive to increased collaboration between different ethnic groups. However, the project was unable to generate the desired results through social media. Despite many attempts and over 5000 'likes' on the Sikka Team Facebook page, the expected dialogue around the issues of reconciliation did not take place as envisaged. Even though social media is touted as a popular tool to reach the masses (especially the younger generation), experience from the Sikka Team project indicates that much more has to be done to garner continued engagement from members, retain their interest and get them engaged and contributing to discussions.

Peace effectiveness: The Sikka Team program and outreach activities contributed to reducing ethnic stereotypes and prejudices. While these project activities promoted diversity and mutual respect, societal transformation requires a much more comprehensive approach where regular engagement is promoted and encouraged, especially among extremist and

conflicting factions. While the ground work was laid through the creation of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships, much more needs to be done to ensure that collaboration between the groups continues beyond the project phase.

Coordination: SFCG maintained a positive collaborative relationship with all stakeholders from national to grassroots level. Several challenges were faced, such as the language barrier, transport and other infrastructural issues, limited resources, low participation by some communities and limited engagement. SFCG and partners successfully overcame these challenges as to not hinder the progress of the project.

Sustainability: Even though implementing partners and groups that implemented the outreach activities expressed willingness to continue some of the interventions, they do not have the necessary resources to do so. No independent initiatives implemented as a result of the project could be found.

Conclusions and lessons learnt

Development and airing of TV series: The strategy of developing a commercial product with popular actors using a popular game (i.e. cricket) was commendable. However, due to weaknesses in marketing the program and competition with programs on other channels, the program may not have reached a large audience. Hence SFCG recognizes the need for better planning in the process of scripting, sequencing and marketing the Sikka Team program. The program should have been produced in both local languages since subtitles take away from the flow of the program and communities in the North were not accustomed to working with subtitles.

Implementation of outreach activities: SFCG can engage grassroots level organizations directly instead of going through implementing partners since the groups can communicate with SFCG directly. Identifying and engaging better implementing partners and improving SFCGs field presence are important lessons learnt. Special programs can be carried out to ensure the engagement of segregated members of the community. Customizing programs to suit such groups could be a method to consider. Using school children is effective because they learn the importance of ethnic tolerance and collaboration from a very young age and will utilize this knowledge for the rest of their lives while also taking the message to their parents and wider communities.

Program implementation: More non-residential programs could be conducted in communities instead of other areas, allowing participants to return to their homes at the end of each day (similar to the project organized for the representatives of women's groups). This would encourage increased participation. When engaging youth groups, the project should make sure that they are committed and have time to spend on activities and projects. Engaging school clubs that are mandated to offer social services can be one way of attempting this. Older females tend to have more time as they cook early, sending lunch for children who are in school or at work. Mobilizing religious leaders to take the message of reconciliation is a non-threatening action that is sensitive to the needs of the community. Extremist elements from all ethnic groups are exacerbating the current fragile peace by spreading racial hatred and further polarizing communities. Therefore, there is dire need to engage those with extreme views to mitigate the harm they can cause. Promoting more programs that encourage learning one another's language would ensure that people from different ethnic groups can continue to communicate after establishing contact through activities similar to those implemented by the project. It is important to increase collaboration between ethnically segregated school children so they are encouraged to interact and develop relationships with each other. The Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) is in the process of disseminating tools developed by the project (such as the facilitation guide) through Divisional Secretariat offices in the Districts. There are national integration officers attached to each Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) office who can be

engaged by SFCG in future activities. Facilitated discussions will be a good entry point to initiate this process.

Observations made by field research team: Some of the locations selected for implementing activities (i.e. Matara) were not diverse in representation of different ethnic and religious groups. When selecting communities for implementing activities, it is better to select areas where different ethnic groups and religions are represented. The project needs to identify more committed implementing partners and community based groups, as they would be directly involved in project implementation. Stronger partners would ensure that activities are monitored and followed-up and liaise more closely with local government authorities, community leaders and civil society representatives.

Follow-up and knowledge management: Only a limited number of outreach activities could be implemented through the project due to limited resources (financial, technical and human). SFCG can consider an outreach program that will engage such groups in a continuous process. They must also develop and implement comprehensive knowledge management and follow-up plans that will ensure tools already developed (the abridged version of the drama, the facilitation guide, DVDs) and those that can be developed (handbooks, scripts, short films, short videos) are disseminated among stakeholders (especially those implementing similar programs on reconciliation).

Recommendations

Following are some of the major recommendations for future programming.

- Implement a more integrated marketing program to promote the drama prior to airing so more interest is generated among potential viewers.
- Consider producing the program in both languages so that viewers get a firsthand experience rather than being distracted with dubbing and/or subtitles.
- Implement outreach activities directly through grassroots community organizations instead of working through implementing partners.
- When implementing programmes, obtain the endorsement of religious leaders so they become more acceptable to the community.
- Encourage and engage school children so that entire communities (parents, teachers) are brought together and learn from one another
- Conduct programs on-site at village level so that more people are encouraged to participate, and women who don't want to leave their homes are engaged.
- When engaging youth groups ensure they are able to commit the necessary time for organization and implementation of activities.
- Explore the possibility of bringing those with extremist views to a common forum so that dialogue can lead to change in perceptions, attitudes and preconceived notions.
- Promote more programs that encourage the learning of each other's languages.
- Increase collaboration between ethnically segregated schools and communities through more outreach activities.
- Facilitate more discussions between local government officials on the concepts related to reconciliation. Utilize national integration officers from ONUR as outreach officers for implementing activities at village level
- When selecting locations for activities choose those with multi-ethnic representation/populations
- Ensure that activities are closely monitored and followed up
- Develop tools based on outreach activities and share these tools for wider replication and dissemination of experiences.

2. 1. Introduction

2.1. Background

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has been working in Sri Lanka since 2011, supporting the process of building a peaceful culture through media programming, dialogues, outreach activities, and capacity strengthening. SFCG Sri Lanka works primarily with youth, women, local government agencies, and communities in vulnerable areas to prevent violence and promote reconciliation. SFCG received funding to produce and broadcast the episodic TV series Team in Sri Lanka, which merges the global appeal of sports with drama to help transform social attitudes and reduce violent behavior in countries grappling with conflict.

The Sikka Team 13-episode TV Series was aired from 21st November 2015 to 20th February 2016 on Saturdays at 8.30 pm on the national television channel Rupavahini. The program aimed to raise awareness and educate the public through multi-ethnic and multi-faceted characters who portray the importance of working together despite their differences to achieve the common goal of lasting peace, which is metaphorically portrayed as winning a cricket match.

Following the airing of the TV series, the TOUR segment of the project was implemented through outreach activities in the districts of Anuradhapura, Ampara, Kandy, Mannar and Matara and implemented through the implementing partners - *Sarvodaya* and Sri Lanka Unites (SLU). The activities included public screenings of Sikka Team, facilitated discussions and the implementation of small initiatives by women and youth. The aim of these outreach activities was to promote greater tolerance and inclusiveness and improve community relationships, especially those between different ethnic and religious groups.

Nucleus Services Private Limited was commissioned to carry out the final evaluation of the above-mentioned project. This report documents the process and outcomes of the final evaluation.

2.2. Context Analysis

The war that ravaged Sri Lanka for 30 long years came to an end in 2009 with the government's defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In the aftermath of the conflict much needed to be done in terms of rebuilding destroyed infrastructures and bringing about reconciliation between deeply divided communities. The end of the war brought new opportunities with reduction of security concerns and free movement to regions that were under siege during the war. It was expected that the end of the war would signal an era of economic prosperity for the country. However, as time passed, people began to feel disappointed and disillusioned since the hoped-for progress did not materialize. In May 2010 the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) was established by the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to identify learning from past events, and measures to avoid similar occurrences in the future whilst promoting national unity among all communities.

Even though the LLRC released its findings in November 2011, stakeholders especially those in the North were disappointed with slow progress made to reforms or action on recommendations. Through the manifesto of the government - the *Mahinda Chinthana* - several projects were launched including those designed to undertake large-scale infrastructure development projects in the former conflict regions of the North and East. This included the development of roads resulting in access and new opportunities in the former conflict regions. However, many felt that aspects of reconciliation were being neglected and issues of participation, equality, and justice (especially for minority communities) were not paid adequate attention. The government of President Rajapaksa also came under scrutiny from the international community, with allegations of human rights violations during the war. There was also polarization among different communities and rising ethnic tensions between different ethnic groups.

Northern provincial council elections were held in September 2013, bringing the Tamil National Alliance into power in the North. This was the first election to take place in the Northern Province since the introduction of the provincial councils through the 13th amendment to the constitution in 1987. There were still many unresolved issues affecting communities in the North including displacement due to the conflict, loss of livelihood, loss of family, occupation of lands by the military, loss of documents and records, and large military presence in the region. Added to this, tension between returning Muslims and Tamils in the North; between Muslims and the Sinhalese in the east; and between Sinhalese and Tamils; and Sinhalese and Muslims in the rest of the country.

The war also created geographical segregation. Young people from all communities grew up in an environment of violent conflict, and didn't know or experience the culture of other ethnic/religious groups. There remained a high level of mistrust and wariness between communities and ethnic groups. There have been many instances of extremist violence and intolerance reported, such as attacks on churches and mosques. A mosque in Dambulla in the Central Province was attacked in April 2012¹ while a church in Hikkaduwa in the Southern Province was attacked in January 2014². Perpetrators of both attacks included Buddhist monks. Anti-Muslim campaigns have been prevalent in the last few years with attacks on businesses owned by Muslims and calls to boycott such establishments. An outcry and campaign against Halal certification has also taken place since 2013 with a group spearheaded by the *Bodu Bala Sena* (BBS) calling for a halt in the Halal system of certification for foods and other products³.

The new government came into power in January 2015, promising an end to corruption and action against racism. The regime change was seen to be a win for those promoting reconciliation and national unity. Currently, the Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation works to promote a vision to *build a strong and integrated Sri Lankan Community whilst protecting a sociocultural value system that is unique to various communities* (source: <http://www.nirmin.gov.lk>). The minister has established the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) under the leadership of former president Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. ONUR focuses on the vision for *A strong, stable, progressive, inclusive and peace-loving nation where all Sri Lankans co-exist in harmony and unity, while diversity and national identity are respected and celebrated with a guarantee of equal opportunity in economic, social, cultural and political spheres for every citizen* (source: <http://www.onur.gov.lk>). Plans are also underway to introduce a National Policy on Reconciliation following a public consultation process with a view to building an inclusive society.

It is within this context that the projects TEAM and TOUR (Team Outreach) were implemented by SFCG Sri Lanka. The baseline survey done at the inception of the project revealed that there was very limited (9%) discourse on social media on the topics of social integration and reconciliation. Interviews with key informants indicated that there was mistrust inherent amongst communities. For example, the Sinhalese communities in Katugasthota, Kandy felt that the Muslim were "taking over" due to the migration of many Muslims to the area. The survey also indicated that *inter-ethnic respect in the target locations is not very satisfactory and remains a potential but hidden threat to promoting social harmony* (Baseline survey report, P 16).

2.3. Objectives

¹ Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-17852900>

² Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25716456>

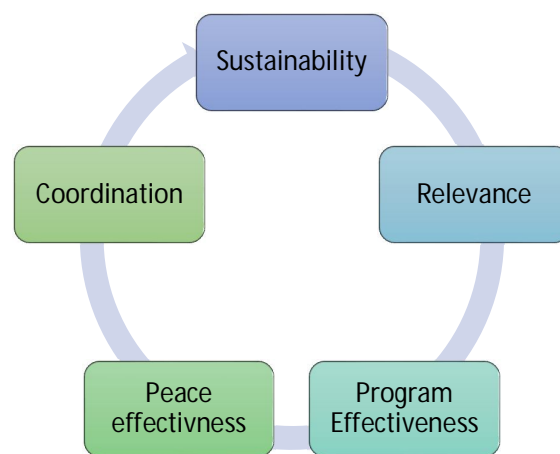
³ Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21494959>

The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the contribution of the project in reducing prejudices, stereotypes and misunderstanding across divides while promoting reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

The evaluation attempted to determine whether the specific objectives of the project, as detailed below, had been met.

1. To initiate a nationwide dialogue on inter-religious and inter-ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka through The Team.
2. Shifting perception of community members in target districts of Sri Lanka away from intolerance and prejudice towards greater tolerance and inclusiveness; and
3. Facilitating youth and women’s organizations in the selected locations to design and implement community activities/initiatives to improve community relationships in targeted locations.

Figure 1: Components under study



2.4. Methodology

A mixed method approach including review of secondary information, focus group discussions with youth and women’s groups, key informant interviews, questionnaire survey and case studies have been used to collect feedback about the project. Since a viewership survey was conducted in 2016, it was decided to focus on outreach activities when carrying out the evaluation. This was decided in consultation with the SFCG project team.

The following tasks were carried out:

1. Desk review of secondary information:
Review of viewership survey results, viewer data and ratings, project documents, reports, social media chatter i.e. Facebook page “likes” and responses to online viewer questions were studied to craft a suitable strategy for the survey and determine the sample size.
2. Research design development and Identification of respondents: A suitable research and sampling methodology was developed in consultation with SFCG. Both qualitative (FGDs, KIIs and case studies) and quantitative (questionnaire survey) were used. Focus of the evaluation was based on the key points: relevance, program effectiveness, peace effectiveness, coordination and sustainability.
3. Preparation of guidelines and questionnaires for the survey: Questionnaires and guidelines for the evaluation including Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were developed based on indicators and key points mentioned in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Drafts of the questionnaire were discussed with the SFCG head of programs, program manager for social integration and the Asia regional monitoring and evaluation specialist. Their feedback and comments were incorporated into the questionnaires and guidelines. Data collection tools were also translated and made available in Tamil and Sinhala.
4. Field survey: Conducted by experienced researchers, field interviews were conducted in Tamil or Sinhala based on language competencies of respondents.
5. Sampling method: The sample was selected using random sampling methods. Numbers of participants from activities organized the women’s and youth groups were obtained from SFCG and the sample was allocated in proportion to those numbers first per district

and then per activity/ group. A detailed description of sample selection was included in the inception report submitted to SFCG prior to commencing field work.

2.5. Sampling

The table below provides an overview of the tools used for data collection, sample size and purpose of interviewing each category of respondents.

Table 1: Tools of data collection & sample

Tools	Description	No of respondents	Purpose
Sample survey of community	Community members who had participated in activities financed by the seed grant provided to youth and women's groups	Ampara: 60 Anuradhapura: 90 Kandy: 132 Mannar: 138 Matara: 115 Total: 535	To discover if dialogue on reconciliation has been initiated and to identify changes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attitudes - behavior - perception and to measure effectiveness of the seed grant against formulated indicators
FGDs with partners	With representatives of youth and women's groups who have received seed grants	Ampara: 1 (no women's groups were supported) Anuradhapura: 2 Kandy: 2 Mannar: 2 Matara: 2 Total = 9	To identify if women and youth groups have initiated activities towards improving community relationships and reconciliation
KIIs with implementers	With partner staff	With representatives of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sarvodaya in Mannar, Anuradhapura and Kandy and 2. SLU in Ampara and Matara 3. IDEAS consultancy 4. ONUR 5. Coaches of proposal development of partners 6. Actors and director of the program TOTAL = 31 (30+1)	To identify how target audiences are adjusting their behavior or taking specific action to address conflict issues as a result of the show
Case studies	Resulting interventions implemented by partners/ women/youth groups	1 per District for five districts TOTAL = 5	To demonstrate improved inter-identity group relationships and collaborations across the divide

The sample size was selected based on the total number of participants in outreach activities

organized by youth and women's groups in the five districts. In some districts, when the sub-sample size was less than 30, an adjustment was made to fulfil the minimum requirement for a large sample. According to the 'minimum requirement condition, sub-samples were made to match 30. In addition, 30 from each district were selected as a control group. The total planned sample and total achieved sample is provided in the table 2 below:

Table 2: Planned vs achieved sample

District	Participants at activities organized by women's groups		Participants at activities organized by youth groups		Control group		Total sample	
	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved	Planned	Achieved
Ampara	0	0	30	30	30	30	60	60
Anuradhapura	30	30	30	30	30	30	90	90
Kandy	63	63	42	39	30	30	135	132
Mannar	47	47	63	61	30	30	140	138
Matara	30	30	60	55	30	30	120	115
Total	170	170	225	215	150	150	545	535

The sample was further broken down to correspond to the number of participants for each activity as presented in the inception report. When conducting the field survey, it was discovered that there were no participant lists for some of the activities such as the street drama, where large numbers of the public were present, when the number could not be reached per activity, they were taken from among participants who attended other activities, therein allowing District numbers to remain unchanged. The planned number of participants could be met in most cases as indicated by the table above. Numbers were unmet only for activities organized by the youth groups in Kandy, Mannar and Matara (see numbers indicated in red). This reduced the overall sample by 10. Out of the total sample 31.8% were participants of activities organized by women's groups, 40.2% were participants of activities organized by youth groups and 28% were participants of the control group. Hence the planned proportions were met.

It was difficult to get the participation of youth groups as they were involved in studies and other activities. In Kandy, youth group members did not come on the day appointed for the FGD and were then interviewed separately. In Matara several attempts were made before representatives of the youth groups could be met.

31 key informants were interviewed including a representative of ONUR. Since they did not have time for an extended interview, only general feedback about the project was obtained. This information is provided as qualitative input to the report and not included in the analysis of KIIs conducted with the other 30 respondents.

In addition to the above, the evaluation also interviewed SFCG Sri Lanka Country Director, Head of Programs and Program Manager for Social Integration. Nucleus also contacted the former Project Manager and the Regional Director of Asia for SFCG via email and obtained their input and feedback about the project under evaluation.

2.5.1. Profile of key informants

The profile includes 30 key informants. 21 (70%) were men and 9 (30%) were women. Of the key informants 63% were Sinhala, 20% were Tamil, 13% were Muslim and 3% (1 person) was Burgher. Please see annex for details of key informants interviewed.

2.5.2. Profile of respondents of the sample survey

Of the respondents interviewed, 66% were women and 34% were men. 90% of participants in activities conducted by women's groups, 51.2% of the participants in activities conducted by youth and 60% of control group members interviewed were women. With regard to level of education, of the total sample 44.5% have General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (OL) qualifications, 37.9% have GCE Advanced Level (AL) qualifications, 14% have grade 8 qualifications, 2.6% were graduates, 0.7% have no education and 0.2% (1 person) has a post-graduate degree. The average age of participants in activities conducted by the women's groups and youth groups were 35 years and 24 years respectively. The average age for the control group was 27.6 years, bringing the average age of the total sample to 28.8.

The number and percentage of respondents by district is provided in table 3 below:

Table 3: Number and percentage of respondents by district

District	Participants at activities organized by women's groups	Participants at activities organized by youth groups	Control group	Total
Ampara	0 0.0%	30 50.0%	30 50.0%	60 100.0%
Anuradhapura	30 33.3%	30 33.3%	30 33.3%	90 100.0%
Kandy	63 47.7%	39 29.5%	30 22.7%	132 100.0%
Mannar	47 34.1%	61 44.2%	30 21.7%	138 100.0%
Matara	30 26.1%	55 47.8%	30 26.1%	115 100.0%
Total	170 31.8%	215 40.2%	150 28.0%	535 100.0%

2.6. Data analysis

Separate questionnaires and guidelines were developed for the following categories of respondents, see annex for data collection tools used:

1. Survey of community members that participated in activities organized by women's and youth groups
2. Survey of control group from a similar background, but not having participated in project supported outreach activities
3. Key informant interviews with implementing partners, government officials, actors and other stakeholders
4. Focus groups discussions with women's and youth groups
5. Case studies.

A database was developed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for entering data from field surveys for analysis. Data collected from the field survey was translated into English and entered in the database. Data was cleaned and quality-checked to ensure standards were maintained. The data collecting and entering processes were carried out simultaneously to ensure quick turnaround. Data was analyzed to extract necessary information after which analysis was carried out. Findings provided input for narration against the criteria mentioned in the Terms of Reference and the project's planned indicators.

2.7. Limitations

Some challenges were encountered while conducting the field work. Initially it was planned to carry out random sampling where the sample was allocated proportionately based on the

number of participants for each activity. However, once field work commenced it was discovered that some implementing women's and youth groups did not have participant list for their activities (such as forum theatre performances where many members of the public participated in public locations). In such cases snowball sampling was used where researchers identified a few persons who participated in the activities and proceeded to identify others through them.

Another challenge was the disinterest and lack of participation from representatives of women's and youth groups in some locations. In Kandy for example, none of the youth groups participated in the FGD even after confirming participation. One of the implementing partners, Sarvodaya organized the meeting and received confirmation regarding participation. A central location in Kandy town was booked for the meeting as the Sarvodaya office was located out of town. Where representatives of youth groups did not participate in the FGDs, they were interviewed separately. It was also difficult to meet some of the key informants including representatives from implementing partners and artistes of the program. When key informants could not be met in person, interviews were conducted over the phone.

Some activities were still not completed at the time of the evaluation. The publication of a bilingual newsletter in Kandy was a case in point. Hence, the designated sample of beneficiaries for such activities could not be met. In the interest of retaining the sample size, the number of beneficiaries for that activity were taken from the other (completed) activities from the District and included in the sample.

These limitations caused delays in data collection and field work and more time than originally envisaged was spent on field work.

3. Findings of the Evaluation:

This chapter documents the findings of the evaluation. Findings are based on the secondary review of the viewership survey; survey of participants of outreach activities organized by women's and youth groups including the control group sample; FGDs with representatives of women's and youth groups that organized the outreach activities; and key informant interviews with stakeholders of the project including community leaders, local government officers, staff of implementing partners, SFCG team members, actors and the director of Sikka Team. The findings are organized under the key areas mentioned in the TOR: 1) Relevance, 2) Program Effectiveness, 3) Peace effectiveness 4) Coordination and 5) Sustainability. Findings are responsive to the questions raised under each of these key areas and are organized under the relevant sub-headings as specified in the TOR.

3.1. Relevance

This section documents the findings related to the key evaluation questions listed under relevance criteria in the TOR. This includes the relevance of project interventions, target group identification, timeliness of interventions and adherence to principles of conflict sensitivity.

3.1.1. How relevant were the project interventions in facilitating the process of reconciliation across ethnic, religious, political, generational, and gender divides in Sri Lanka?

Despite the change in government in January 2015, there has been little change in inter-ethnic relationships. Polarization among different ethnic groups and religions remains high. In this context, the project objectives of initiating a nationwide dialogue on inter-religious and inter-ethnic reconciliation, influencing perception of community members away from intolerance and prejudice and implementing community-based initiatives is timely and relevant.

Key informants from the two implementing partners, Sarvodaya and Sri Lanka Unites (SLU) said that the project activities including the airing of the Sikka Team program and the outreach activities, were able to communicate the importance of the concept of reconciliation within a short period of time. The common problems faced in today's society are reflected in the Sikka Team TV program and sport was a good topic on which everyone can relate. The story was perceived to be a sensitive portrayal of different communities. One person said the program reflected the current situation in the country and showed that if we work together we can overcome many issues. However, some key informants pointed out that the program was not so popular or widely seen in some parts of the country. Some said that the drama highlighted the cricket matches too much. The national level representative of Sri Lanka Unites mentioned that *"The content is somewhat relevant but considering the overall show, it's a vague attempt to address bigger issues in societies on social cohesion"*.

Women's groups indicated that the activities were an opportunity to meet people they would otherwise not be able to meet (Anuradhapura); the programs were well received by participants (Kandy); addressed issues related to ethnic, religious, political and generational disparities (Mannar); and influenced thinking related to caste systems (Matara).

Youth groups in the five districts said activities created an opportunity for sharing ideas and experiences related to social issues (Ampara); facilitated the exchange of ideas among different ethnic and religious groups (Anuradhapura); created awareness about each other's cultures (Kandy); facilitated reconciliation among different ethnic groups (Mannar); and reduced the potential for future conflict (Matara).

Overall, outreach activities provided a platform for communities from different ethnic groups and religions to come together in a common forum and participate in activities benefiting the entire community. This led to the creation of better awareness and understanding about each other's culture, traditions and religion.

Participants of outreach activities when asked how relevant the outreach activities were, responded as indicated in figure 2 below:

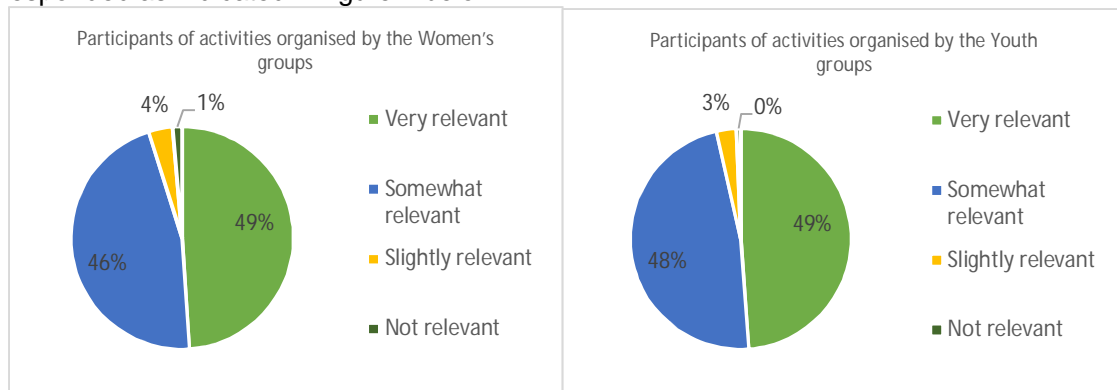


Figure 2: Relevance of outreach activities

95% of participants of activities organized by the women's group said the project was relevant, with 49% saying it was very relevant, and 46% saying it was somewhat relevant. 97% of the participants in activities organized by youth groups said it was relevant, with 49% saying it was very relevant, and 48% saying somewhat relevant. 83.2% of the participants in activities organized by the women's groups and 83% of the participants of activities organized by the youth groups said that it helped them improve their awareness about other ethnic groups and their lives by changing the way they perceive and treat people from other ethnic and religious groups.

The relevance of the Sikka Team program to local socio-political dynamics in the community was also explored through the viewership survey. The viewership survey studied the extent to which the issues raised in the program were relevant to the target audience, and to the current socio-political dynamics that existed within Sri Lanka (viewership survey report, page 3). In order to determine the interest of the target audience respondents were asked to indicate *how frequently they watched the program*. While only 18.9% watched the TV series very often, 42.7% of watched it somewhat often, and 38.4% did not view it very often (viewership survey report, page 6). When asked why they liked the program 43.6% of respondents said they were interested in the Sikka Team TV series *because it involved the game of cricket*. 31.1% liked the fact that the TV series *featured inter-personal relationships, the need for reconciliation, and the emphasis it had on team work between individuals from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds*.

The timeliness of the project is also corroborated by the representative of ONUR, who said the project came at a time when there was a vacuum for this kind of program promoting inter-ethnic engagement and reconciliation. He observed that it was the first program of its kind in Sri Lanka.

SFCG's intention in developing this program was to provoke new thinking, and the Sikka program helped a lot of people view things differently. For example, the show presented unconventional ideas such as a love affair between a Muslim girl and a Sinhala boy. Some of those interviewed in the Eastern Province, for example, said that this is not acceptable to Muslim communities while those from other regions appreciated the concept of inter-cultural marriage with some even mentioning that this should be promoted further. The program succeeded in making an impact on the industry, and since the program aired, other channels have developed similar shows. SFCG further states that through the screening and dialogue process and the outreach activities, they could engage communities that were not engaged before. Through facilitated discussions people and communities were engaged in the topics. The use of TV drama as a tool was seen to be highly relevant and the facilitated discussions with government officers at DS division level developed a new conversation on reconciliation in the districts.

SFCG worked under three main result areas in this project: 1) discussion and debate on inter religious and inter-ethnic reconciliation via airing of the Sikka Team drama, 2) change in beliefs, images and perceptions of the 'other' through outreach events and 3) implementation of community reconciliation activities. Given the context of inter religious intolerance and ethnic polarization that prevailed at the onset of the project (in 2013), activities designed under the project were timely and relevant and contributed to laying the foundation for a process of reconciliation across ethnic, religious, political, generational, and gender divides in the communities supported. Even though a wide dialogue on social media did not take place as expected, the outreach activities worked to create much needed awareness between the different ethnic and religious groups in the supported communities. Key informants, representatives of women's and youth groups and participants of outreach activities agreed that project activities were relevant and timely. However, more respondents of the viewership survey liked the program because it involved the game of cricket than because it dealt with issues of reconciliation.

3.2. Did the project target the right group of participants with a right set of strategies and activities?

The five project Districts were Mannar, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Matara and Ampara. The justification for selecting these districts is as follows. **Mannar** is a district in the North with a majority Tamil population devastated by the 30-year conflict, and now suffering from a new wave of ethnic tension between the host Tamils and the returnee Muslims. **Ampara** is a District in the East with a majority Muslim population affected by war and the tsunami,.

Tension and conflict has increased between ethnic communities in recent times. **Anuradhapura**, is a District located in the North-Central Province and bordered by previous LTTE stronghold areas, considered a sacred area by Buddhists. **Matara** is a District where many hardcore Sinhala-Buddhist politicians and groups originate. **Kandy** is a plantation District in the Hill Country with a Sinhala majority as well as a significant Muslim and Tamil plantation population (source: extracted from SFCG project proposal).

The concept development for the TV series was done in consultation with the community from the five Districts where key stakeholders were interviewed and their ideas were sought about the topics of reconciliation and social integration. The outcomes from these discussions were fed into a “curriculum summit” that *brought together a cross-section of persons representing civil society, peace building experts, TV and media experts, as well as representatives from the target audience. The purpose of this workshop was to identify key messages to be promoted through the TV series* (source: Curriculum Summit report, p 2).

Regarding selection of participants, key informants from the implementing partners, Sarvodaya and SLU said they selected youth since it was important to create awareness about the concepts related to reconciliation among the younger generation if future conflict is to be avoided. They also made a conscious effort to include all ethnic groups. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that were working at ground level were engaged to maximize participation of youth and other community members.

Representatives of women’s groups mentioned that working with local CBOs was an effective way of engaging the right target groups (Anuradhapura); people willingly participated in the activities (Kandy); engagement of women was an effective way of promoting collective action for reconciliation (Mannar); and the right target groups were selected since implementing partners were aware of community needs (Matara).

Youth groups mentioned that target groups were based on different activities such as selecting school children for leadership training (Ampara). Even though it was initially difficult to get participation after the event, participants appreciated the activity (Anuradhapura). Participation improved after religious leaders got involved and encouraged people to participate (Kandy). Youth interested in social welfare and activities were engaged (Mannar); and the right target groups had been selected as local organizations (Sarvodaya and plantation societies) carried out the selection (Matara).

Community members willingly participated in activities and were able to harness their local networks and contacts to ensure that activities were implemented successfully. Community and religious leaders were engaged to endorse the activities. Activities were organized for school children and youth, which meant that parents, teachers and other community members also participated.

With regard to outreach activities the project targeted the right group of participants. A dialogue on reconciliation needed to be initiated at grassroots level, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities where members of different groups lived in isolation from each other. However, with regard to activities to create a nationwide dialogue through the Sikka Team program, the project has not been as successful in reaching hoped-for audiences and target groups. Results of the viewership survey indicates that many of those that watched the program did so because it involved the game of cricket rather than its discussion of issues related to reconciliation. The project could have done more to generate interest in the program prior to airing so that more people got involved in the dialogue on reconciliation.

3.3. How timely was the project intervention considering the conflict dynamics in Sri Lanka?

As discussed in chapter 1.2 since the end of the war in 2009, there have been initiatives designed at reconciliation and integration implemented by several stakeholders including the Government of Sri Lanka through the Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation. However, communities remain polarized and do not trust each other. This is exacerbated by extremist factions in each side spurring extremist views. According to the baseline survey and the curriculum summit carried out at the beginning of the project, people of different ethnic groups remain mistrustful of each other.

Consultations done in the five Districts as a precursor to the curriculum summit identified several key issues: 1) **Unemployment** is a key element causing unrest and frustrations among youth, 2) There is an increasing consumption of **drugs and alcohol** among soldiers with disabilities, resulting in domestic violence, 3) **Language** remains a major barrier preventing communication among different ethnic groups and 4) Children **segregated by ethnicity** within the school system are prevented from interacting with children of other ethnic groups.

Many challenges were identified through the consultations and the curriculum summit. There were other challenges such as **lack of opportunity for dialogue, limited interaction** between communities, **continued mistrust** between majority and minority communities and **lack of freedom of expression**. Specific challenges and issues were identified in the war affected areas. These included, illegal **land acquisition**, **lack of protection** for war-affected women, **lack of opportunities for livelihood** development and other basic needs and **lack of government services in the Tamil language**. Challenges also included **lack of protection and relief for marginalized groups, militarization** of the north and east, and **lack of freedom to commemorate the dead**. In plantation areas there was **isolation** mainly due to poor infrastructure (i.e. roads, transport facilities) and **lack of access to services** for plantation communities due to **language barriers**. Ethnic and religious-based political parties were using this crisis to their advantage by fueling **communal hatred and misunderstanding** to further their political agenda (adapted from curriculum summit report).

Given this context, development of a drama highlighting collaboration between different ethnic groups was seen to be timely and relevant. The effort of outreach activities in bringing together different ethnic groups and promoting inter-ethnic and inter-religious collaboration was also timely. Key informants in Ampara said that since ethnic groups are geographically segregated in Ampara, there are fewer opportunities for communal violence. In Mannar, they said that few incidents of religious conflict could be observed. In Kandy, the activities were seen to be timely as the district is composed of all ethnic groups and there is need for promoting of cross-cultural exchanges. The key informant from ONUR mentioned that: *Timing of the program was good. There was a vacuum for this kind of program promoting inter-ethnic engagement and reconciliation. It was the first among program of its kind among others.*

Representatives of women's groups in Anuradhapura said that religious leaders usually do not get an opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas, but these activities provided an opportunity for the same. In Kandy, they were happy to be invited to such activities and praised its timeliness, considering issues in the country at present where minority Muslims and Tamils feel they are discriminated against. Respondents in Mannar pointed out the importance of creating understanding among different ethnic groups while reducing bitterness felt by those directly affected by the war. In Matara they mentioned that even though there is no conflict based on ethnicity in their communities, activities such as these worked to prevent potential conflicts among different castes in the community.

Youth participants in Ampara mentioned the activities provided a platform for people from different ethnic groups to come together. Youth groups in Anuradhapura pointed to how when there was insufficient exchange between youth from different communities, the workshop provided them opportunities to meet youth from other communities and develop friendships. In Kandy, youth mentioned that awareness had to be created to bring all ethnic groups together, and it was only after they worked together for a while that they developed a close working relationship. In Mannar, the street drama promoted social harmony while the *Shramadana* (donation of labor, usually in community activities) helped people realise the importance of working together to achieve a common goal. In Matara, the activities worked to reduce potential conflict.

According to one of the two former project managers of the TEAM project: "...activities emerged at a time where the public sphere was warming up to the idea of reconciliation and Transitional Justice related programming in the country. There was an acute need in the space for creative media production. The main responsibility was to use the Sikka Team teledrama as a tool to push dialogues in the communities. The project team traveled across the country screening Sikka Team in communities where there were high concentrations of diverse groups. The project aimed at using dialogic approaches to create safe spaces. I would say this was the need of the hour and it was very evident by the overwhelming reception we got from the multi-ethnic/ religious communities who actively came forward to push the message". Kanishka Ratnayake, Former Project Manager, TEAM project

The Asia Regional Director of SFCG observes that: The project was initially designed to be implemented much faster than it was. The writing process of the television drama took a very long time. Hence, the timeline of the project could not be adhered to. However, this didn't cost the project specific results, it meant that the television broadcast coincided with the change in government, with the new government coming into power with an expressed commitment to dealing with the past and some of the key root causes of the divisions in the country. So, the show and the outreach activities on the ground hit at a very ripe time, where there was a lot of interest in the issues at hand.

At the time of project initiation in 2013, communities were prone to conflict, and conflict dynamics in Sri Lanka created polarization between different ethnic and religious groups. This is evidenced by the Aluthgama incident of 2014 (see chapter 2.4 below) where communal violence caused much damage to life and property. There are many factions condoning religious intolerance and hatred towards minorities including the *Bodu Bala Sena*⁴, *the Ravana Balaya*, *Sinhala Ravaya* and others. These organizations claim to protect the interest of the Sinhala Buddhists. It is within this context that SFCG developed and aired the Sikka Team drama, highlighting the need for collaboration and reconciliation between divided factions. It can be said that the project interventions were timely since they came at a time when polarization was at its height, amidst much mistrust and alienation between the different religious and ethnic groups.

3.4. How did the project adhere to the principles of conflict sensitivity?

As discussed in preceding chapters, there is latent and manifest tensions between different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka as evidenced by the Aluthgama incident which occurred in June 2014 where a Sinhala mob attacked a Muslim village, burning buildings to the ground, killing three persons and injuring many others. Significant damage was also caused to property with people losing their homes and businesses⁵. The long-term strategy of SFCG Sri Lanka is to promote a national dialogue for peacebuilding across ethnic, religious and political dividing lines. In designing the TEAM project, SFCG adhered to conflict sensitive principles, engaging the local communities through a participatory approach to curriculum development.

⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21840600>

⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27885824>

Furthermore, this was a pioneering effort in the use of television to foster reconciliation where SFCG attempted to use drama as a tool for peacebuilding.

The program team, implementing partners and women's and youth groups working at the community level were trained and sensitized to initiate and build on positive actions at ground level. Implementing partners said they have been very careful and sensitive in planning the activities, making sure all communities were included and even choosing the meals accordingly (halal food for Muslims, vegetarian meals for Hindus on Fridays etc.).

According to women's groups all ethnic groups were invited (Anuradhapura); the support of local government authorities was sought to create buy-in from the public (Kandy); even those prone to conflict were sensitized and made to understand the need for reconciliation (Mannar); and they made a conscious effort to engage those of all castes when organizing events in the community (Matara).

Youth groups said activities such as forum theater provide an opportunity for people to become active participants as they bring ideas and engage in dialog to resolve problems they face (Ampara). All communities were engaged in the activities (Anuradhapura); creating awareness about the need for ethnic harmony while mindful to use both (Sinhala and Tamil) languages with translations when required (Kandy); reducing conflict through better coordination (Mannar); and organizing activities to include all ethnic and religious groups (Matara); were strategies used to adhere to principles of conflict sensitivity.

4. Findings - Effectiveness

The chapter on effectiveness is divided into two sections as per the TOR. The program effectiveness sub section includes major outputs and outcomes of the project, contribution to greater awareness about cultural diversity, inclusiveness and leadership, contribution to strengthening inter religious and interethnic relationships, behavior and perception changes that have taken place and unexpected positive and/or negative results. The sub section on peace effectiveness includes indications of reduced stereotypes and prejudices, indications towards societal transformation, embracing diversity and increased collaboration among women and youth.

4.1. Program Effectiveness

4.1.1. What are the major outputs and outcomes of this project?

The major outputs and outcomes of the project together with their relevant indicators are discussed in this chapter under the three specific objectives followed by the overall goal of the project.

Strategic Objective 1: To initiate a nationwide dialogue on interreligious and interethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka through The Team:

Achievement of outcome indicators

The intermediate result for the above strategic objective is that **viewers of The Team are constructively discussing and debating inter religious and interethnic reconciliation.**

The first outcome indicator for the objective was that increasing numbers of people from different ethnic/religious groups are participating in the discussion forums on social media. SFCG used Facebook and YouTube as a means of generating dialogue on themes related to reconciliation. The number of visitors to the Sikka team Facebook page increased by 57% within an year. However the expected dialogue on reconciliation encouraged by the page (with tools such as online polls and questions from the program each week) did not garner a great response from page members.

The second outcome indicator for the objective was the percentage of people surveyed who say that the drama helped them to learn how to respect people from across religious and ethnic communities.

From amongst the 535 survey respondents, only 20% (105) watched the Sikka team drama. They are:

- Participants at activities organized by women's groups - 45 (26%)
- Participants at activities organized by youth groups - 51 (24%)
- Control groups - 9 (6%)
- Total - 105 (20%)

It is significant that only 20% of the project Participants (105 out of 535 surveyed) watched the Sikka Team program while 6% (9 out of 150) (of the control group) watched the Sikka Team program. The relatively lower viewership may be due to the fact that most people in the North and East and other Tamil speaking populations do not watch local channels but prefer to watch Indian programs aired on cable or dish TV. Out of those who watched the drama, 95% watched it online, 82% watched it at a facilitated discussion conducted by the project and only 13% watched it when it aired on Rupavahini, indicating a very low viewership through TV when it was broadcast.

According to the viewership survey, 75.4% of the participants said that TV programs like Sikka Team could have significant positive impact in society; 35% of respondents said the program created a sense of self-awareness on the importance and need for unity, coexistence, and equality among different socio-economic and ethnic groups; and 48% said it had an influence in changing preconceived notions towards a particular group in society; 48% indicated it created a positive outlook on overcoming the ethnic prejudice and misunderstanding prevalent in the country, which resulted in them valuing differences. 52% of the viewers recommended the program to others and 64% of them discussed with others the issues that were highlighted. Findings from the viewership survey indicates that even though there is a viewership share of 1.5 million viewers, only a few reflected on the issues of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Even though 75% said the program **could** be used to create a positive impact, less than 50% said it created self-awareness, influenced changes in preconceived notions or created a positive outlook to overcoming ethnic issues.

The following project outputs related to strategic objective 1 were completed:

- 10 regional consultations held with participation of 45% male (17% Tamil + 28% Muslim) 32% female (25% Tamil + 7% Muslim). 39% female participation in adult group and 35.4% female in youth group.
- Curriculum summit conducted and report identifying issues and key themes developed and shared with 3 partners.
- 5-member team worked to develop story line - 1 woman and 4 men, 3 Sinhalese, 1 Tamil, and 1 Muslim. Of these 3 were contracted as script writers, 2 men and 1 woman 2 Sinhalese and 1 Tamil.
- The script is available in Sinhala and English.
- 13 episodes have been telecast on Rupavahini on Saturday from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm since 21st November 2015.
- 1,157,700 (588,200 Male & 569,500 Female) average viewership, 8.5% viewership share (4.3% M & 4.2% F) according to LMRB (Lanka Market Research Bureau).
- Facebook page for Sikka Team has been created and is functioning with 5260 likes. The page generates 119 Average page views per month, 609 average page reach per month, and 245 Average post engagement per month. YouTube updates have been in operation since beginning of the Drama.

- Website developed and launched on 6th January 2017 <http://paalama.lk>
- 360 packages comprised of DVD player, DVD of an abridged version of the programs and facilitation guide have been distributed among schools, DS offices etc.
- Two songs developed. 'Eka Raene' - 26,189 views on YouTube. 'Api Sikko' - 1,168 views on YouTube.
- 360 DVD players distributed in the districts. 1000 DVDs of the program written, 360 have been distributed at the time of reporting.

With regards to strategic objective #1, all targets except the following have been met:

1. Target for women's participation in stakeholder consultations (50%),
2. Target for getting a multi ethnic cast since there was no Muslim caste member,
3. Increase in viewership share (20%) could not be determined since comparative statistics are not available
4. Increase in request for songs (5%) could not be determined since it was not monitored.

Based on the above it can be concluded that even though the targets / outputs have been mostly met, the expected dialogue among the viewers on peace and reconciliation has not taken place. Interaction on social media was limited and even though the Facebook page has over 5000 likes, engagement and participation in the online polls and discussions are very low. Even though 75.4% of the viewership survey respondents said that programs such as these could have a positive impact on society, less than 50% of them said it created a sense of self-awareness (34.8%), influenced pre-conceived notions (47.5%) and created a positive outlook to overcoming the ethnic issue (47.7%). Most (43.6%) watched the program because it involved the game of cricket while a lesser number (31.1%) liked it because it featured inter personal relationships and the need for reconciliation.

Strategic Objective 2: To shift perception of community members (particularly women and youth) in target districts of Sri Lanka away from intolerance and prejudice towards greater tolerance, and inclusiveness:

Achievement of outcome indicators

The intermediate result for the second strategic objective was: **Women and youth in these targeted areas have positively changed their beliefs, images, and perceptions of the "other"**. The related outcome indicator for this objective was the percentage of participating community members that indicate willingness to collaborate with members of other communities for activities.

A field survey of 535 respondents (385 outreach activity participants and 150 control group) was carried out to determine the outcomes of outreach activities. The respondents were asked to rate the increased collaboration among religious and ethnic groups on a scale ranging from very poor to very good. 78.8% of the participants of activities organized by women's groups (52.3 + 26.5) and 71.8% (50.7 + 21.1) of the participants of activities organized by youth groups rated the increased collaboration between ethnic and religious groups as good or very good. 70% of the interviewed participants said they are currently working with those from other ethnic groups while 83.3% said they have friends from other ethnic groups. The numbers increased from pre project levels mentioned in the baseline survey.

Respondents from the survey were asked how often they interacted with each other: 60.2% participants in activities organized by the women's groups and 45.8% of participants from the activities organized by youth groups said people from different ethnicities in their area interact with each other either often or very often. When asked if they would be interested in participating in activities which will help them get to know about other ethnic groups, all of the

respondents that participated in activities organized by the women's groups said that they would. 99.5% of the participants organized by the youth groups said they too would be interested in participating in activities which will help them get to know about other ethnic groups. This number among the control group was lower at 85.7% signifying that participants in outreach activities were more receptive to the idea of participating in activities which will help them get to know about other ethnic groups. Experiences of those that organized and participated in outreach activities indicates that often groups of one ethnicity or religion are not aware of the customs, culture and traditions of another ethnic or religious group. Nor do they understand the reason behind certain practices. Through outreach activities, such groups were able to understand and become aware of each other's religious and cultural traditions and practices. Many said they were not aware before, and through this awareness they developed a greater understanding. Some said they also identified certain similarities and opportunities for collaboration. The relationships they forged through outreach activities have motivated them to collaborate and learn more about other groups' culture and religion. All categories of stakeholders interviewed in the evaluation said that being a part of the project has changed their perceptions about those from other ethnic groups and religions. Respondents of the survey when asked how their perceptions changed after viewing the drama said they now perceived everyone to be "equal" and that they should treat one another as equals. Tamil respondents of the survey rated religious intolerance in the community higher than their Sinhala and Muslim counterparts.

The following project outputs related to strategic objective 2 were completed:

- 70% of the participants interviewed in the survey said they are currently working with those from other ethnic groups, while 83.3% said that they have friends from other ethnic groups.
- 25 screenings of Sikka Team have taken place during the project, reaching an audience of 3290 people in five Districts - Ampara, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Mannar and Matara. 129 youth and 157 women participated in 10, two-day residential facilitated discussion workshops in 5 Districts. These women and youth represented 15 youth groups and 8 women's groups.
- 129 youth and 157 women participated in 10, two-day residential facilitated discussion workshops in 5 Districts. 15 youth groups and 8 women's groups were represented.

The importance of reconciliation and attitude change was also mentioned by almost all stakeholders. A majority of key informants said that the Sikka program induced positive change in behavior towards other ethnic and religious groups and agreed that the program created an opportunity for developing mutual respect and that the entire drama attempted to reflect such mutual respect among different groups. 75.4% of the respondents from the viewership survey said programs such as these could have a positive impact on society. 34.8% said the program created a sense of self-awareness on the importance and need for unity; 47.5% indicated that it had an influence in changing preconceived notions; 47.7% indicated it created a positive outlook to overcoming the ethnic issue; 52% of the viewers recommended the program to others, and 64.4% of them discussed with others the issues that were highlighted.

All targets with regards to strategic objective number 2 have been achieved.

Strategic Objective 3: To facilitate youth and women's groups in selected locations to design and implement community reconciliation activities/initiatives to improve community relationships in targeted locations:

Achievement of outcome indicators

The intermediate result for strategic objective 3 was: Youth and women groups in the targeted locations are actively addressing issues affecting social integration and promoting reconciliation. The first outcome indicator for the third strategic objective is the number of collaborative projects implemented by youth and women groups in project locations over the life of the project and the percentage of people surveyed who report that the peacebuilding initiatives have helped improve inter-community relationship in target locations. 29 small projects promoting outreach activities designed for promoting peace and reconciliation have been implemented by 17 youth groups and 12 women's groups in the five designated Districts.

The second outcome indicator for this objective was the percentage of people surveyed who report that the peacebuilding initiatives have helped improve inter-community relationships in target locations. 77.4% of the participants of activities organized by women's groups and 72.7% of the participants of activities organized by youth groups rated the contribution of the activities to strengthening relationships between ethnic and religious groups as good or very good. Community members from different ethnic groups and religions have been engaged through this activities and have often received the endorsement of religious leaders in the regions.

The following project outputs related to strategic objective 3 were completed:

- 20 youth selected from the partners were trained on facilitation skills. Of this 50% were women.
- Facilitation guide is available in both languages and has been distributed among 360 institutions.
- 10 facilitated discussions completed with 286 participants.
- community consultation has taken place including curriculum summit and script development training.

Most of the targets set under the above strategic objective have been achieved. For some (see below) targets even though the activities have been done, they have not managed to reach planned numbers:

1. 450 copies of the facilitation guide have been printed, but only 360 have been disseminated at the time of reporting.
2. 50% of the grant was to be implemented by multi-ethnic groups, only 31% have been implemented by multi-ethnic groups, but participants have been of a multi-ethnic group for 97% of the grant.

Outreach activities have laid the foundation for initiating community reconciliation activities in the five Districts. Even though many of the selected locations were multi-ethnic, different religious and ethnic groups have been living in isolation from each other for the most part. In Anuradhapura for instance, Muslim traders visited their Sinhala counterparts only for trading purposes; in Ampara, Muslims (especially women), Tamils and Sinhalese were geographically isolated from one another; and in Mannar there was little interaction between Tamils and Muslims. Through outreach activities, communities were brought together and long-term relationships were initiated. Women's groups in Anuradhapura for example stated that some of the Muslim traders visit them and ask after their families when coming to their villages; Muslim girls in Ampara have participated in leadership programs and Tamil and Muslim women participate in Sinhala classes together in Mannar. Hence community relationships between different groups in the targeted locations have improved as a result of the outreach activities.

Overall goal: To contribute towards increased cooperation across religious and ethnic lines to advance reconciliation among the different communities in Sri Lanka

The project was designed during a crucial period when inter community relationships were at a low ebb, and communal tensions between the different groups was mounting (see chapter 1.2).

Feedback from SFCG indicates they are satisfied with the project's progress. For the Sikka Team drama they successfully develop a script with persons from the main ethnic groups and were able to engage a TV channel to air the program at a prime time. Said channel (Rupavahini, which is the state TV channel and the widest outreach in Sri Lanka) enabled wider coverage and through a prime-time slot, they also had good viewership. The survey indicates that the rating for the time slot during which the program aired went up by 15 to 20 percent. SFCG sees the outreach activities as an achievement because they reached grassroots communities and engaged them in an interactive manner. Several community initiatives were developed and implemented as a result of the project.

Key informants were asked to describe the kind of relationship that existed between different ethnic groups before the project (2013) and today (2017). 13 of 30 key informants (43.33%) said the relationship that existed between the different ethnic groups was neutral. Nine said it was good, while only one person said that it was very good. Five of the key informants said the relationship between different ethnic groups in their community was not good in 2013. When asked about the relationship between communities now, 19 of 30 said it was good. Those who said it was very good also increased to 5 while those who said it was neutral or bad reduced to 2 persons each. From these findings, it can be surmised that among the key informants, those who perceived an improved relationship between different ethnic groups within their communities increased significantly during the project period. This can be compared with findings in the baseline survey where a majority of key informants stated that the entire community is prepared to coexist within their boundaries, but still carry a number of untold and hidden misunderstandings and misconceptions about the 'other.'

81.8% of participants in activities organized by women's groups agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that people in their community had respect for each other. 74.5% of participants of activities organized by the youth groups also agreed. The percentage of control group members that agreed with the statement was slightly less at 72.1%. The baseline study data shows that 66% of the respondents said they have very good/good relationships with people from other ethnic groups. The end-line survey carried out with project participants in 2017 shows increase in that aspect with 81% of the participants (from both youth and women's groups) saying they have a very good/good relationship with people from different ethnic groups in their community. A majority of key informants, representatives from women's and youth groups, and participants of activities agreed that the project created awareness about the need for increased cooperation across religious and ethnic lines.

The percentage of respondents who said they have a friend from another ethnic group increased among all communities - by 22% among Muslims, 11% among Tamils and by 4% among Sinhalese. The percentage of persons collaborating with people from other ethnic groups also increased among all ethnicities - by 26% among Muslims, 3.4% among Sinhalese and 3.3% among Tamils. In the control group, the percentage of friends from other ethnic groups was lower than in the beneficiary group. They increased the number of friends from other ethnic groups by only 7.2%. The number of control group members working with those from other ethnic groups increased by 17.5%. 77.4% and 72.75% of participants of activities organized by women's groups and youth groups respectively rated the contribution of the activities in strengthening relationships between ethnic and religious groups as good or very good.

Figures provided above coupled with FGDs and KIIs with key stakeholders indicate that the project has managed to achieve the overall objective to contribute towards increased cooperation across religious and ethnic lines to advance reconciliation among different communities in Sri Lanka.

4.1.2. How has the project contributed to increasing greater awareness among the target population in the selected locations about cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and leadership?

Key informants mentioned the need to develop a

united identity as Sri Lankans, understand each other, respect all religions and communities, face challenges together, develop inter-cultural and inter-ethnic understanding, and reject ethnic violence. Most key informants agreed that activities of the project helped to create greater awareness among participants about cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and leadership. They also stated that the activities provided them with an opportunity to present their creativity and bring their positive ideas to fruition through collaboration with others. For example, involving school children ensured that they learned to appreciate children from other ethnic and religious groups while also taking this message back to their families and communities. Activities also provided an opportunity to those that did not have such opportunities in the past.

Representatives from women's and youth groups noted there were many commonalities between religions rather than differences and that one should appreciate such commonalities. There was agreement from all participating women and youth that the activities increased such awareness and provided insight about the need for reconciliation.

The youth groups in Ampara observed that since the activities were limited (each group was supported to implement one activity only) the impact was also limited. Youth groups in Kandy observed that working together they were able to share their ideas and cultural values, and develop friendships. Even different traditional foods from other ethnic groups were shared. Such sharing promoted better understanding about each other's cultures and traditions and made them more appreciative towards other ethnic groups.

Almost half (48%) of respondents from the viewership survey indicated that the TV series created a positive outlook to overcoming the ethnic issue prevalent in the country. This resulted in them valuing differences as opposed to discriminating against them. 35% indicated that the TV series created awareness on the importance and need for unity, coexistence and equality among different socio-economic and ethnic groups within a given community. Only 15% of the respondents indicated that the TV series *emphasized the need*

PEACE THROUGH THEATRE

SFCG gave us a good experience of performing on across ethnic and religious divides in Sri Lanka. In the past, there were gaps between Sinhala, Muslim and Tamil communities related to not having mutual understanding and respect for each other. With the anti-religious sentiments in the country, people started looking at those from other religions with suspicion. Through our performances, we tried to send the message that we should all work together with tolerance and respect for each other's religion. People also got involved in the performance and brought their ideas on addressing issues of mistrust and intolerance, sharing their experiences and highlighting how they dealt with these

Kaneshpillai Niroshan,
Akkaraipattu, Ampara

for working together as a team, despite differences among each other (ethnic or otherwise). Ten percent of viewers indicated that the TV series created constructive awareness which resulted in the need to be more inclusive in the treatment of the Tamil community (source: viewership survey report, page 2). These findings from the viewership survey indicate that though viewers understood and accepted the need for overcoming ethnic issues, only a few of them felt a real impact or need to change their treatment of minority groups and actually changed their perceptions and/or actions towards these groups.

Survey respondents were asked to rate their awareness about cultural diversity, inclusiveness and leadership as a result of participating in outreach activities on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). 86% of participants of activities organized by women's groups and 83% of the participants of activities organized by youth groups said the contribution of activities in increasing awareness about cultural diversity, inclusiveness and leadership was good or very good.

4.1.3. How has the project contributed to strengthening individual and group relationships between ethnic and religious groups?

Key informants said project activities provided participants with an opportunity to better understand other ethnic groups; provided awareness about social integration; developed relationships among different ethnic and religious groups and developed continuous engagement among community members. Project activities also provided an opportunity to learn something from each other's language; initiated a discussion on reconciliation and cultivated the idea that everyone is equal. Participants collectively reflected on solutions to address issues of communal violence and changing attitudes of people. The aforementioned actions contributed to strengthening of individual and group relationships between different ethnic and religious groups.

Commenting on the project, Ms. Iresha Shanthi, District Coordinator of Sarvodaya (Kandy), one of the implementing partners said: *"Most programs were jointly organized with different community groups. This has increased understanding and relationship among different community members. We have identified new target groups, gained new members, increased links between government departments, schools and the police among others"*.

PEACE THROUGH SHRAMADHANA

In Madatugama, Preschools are also segregated according to ethnic groups – Sinhala and Muslim. The Shramadana was organized to clean both Sinhala and Muslim preschools in the area with the support of the community. 130 people participated, parents provided refreshments and tools. Getting the "blessings" of the chief prelate of the Buddhist temple and the Maulavi of the mosque meant that both communities received the endorsement of their religious leaders for the activity. People talked to each other, they understood that common bonds can be forged. For some, it was the first time they spoke to someone from the other ethnic group. The Sinhala women realized that women from the Muslim community share the same issues when it comes to child care and family matters. Both communities learned an important lesson – more can be achieved if they work together.

Dayani Bandara
Sarvodaya Women's Society
Madatugama

When key informants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), the contribution of the project in strengthening relationships between ethnic and religious groups, 83% said it was either very good or good (with 40% saying it was very good and 43% saying it was good).

The baseline survey (2013) showed that 66% of respondents said they have very good/good relationships with other ethnic groups in their community, while 25% to 33% of respondents across all Districts stated that there is an average or bad relationship. Respondents of the

end-line survey (2017) showed that 81% of participants of activities carried out by women’s groups and youth groups said there was a very good/good relationship between different ethnic groups in their community (showing an increase of 15%). Similarly, 19% of each group said the relationship between these groups was moderate compared to baseline data of 25% to 33% (registering a decrease of 6% to 14%).

Representatives of women’s groups said the activities developed relationships between different ethnic groups. They further stated that it was a pity that local government representatives did not respond to the invitation and hence did not participate (Anuradhapura). Had they participated, officials would have seen the benefits of working together and could have contributed to sustaining the project activities. In Kandy, they mentioned there was better awareness and cooperation among different ethnic groups as a result of project activities. In Mannar, Tamil and Muslim women developed friendships by participating in Sinhala classes together. In Matara relationships between different individuals and groups improved as a result of project activities.

Youth groups in Ampara said that even though different ethnic groups are geographically segregated, these types of activities created opportunities for better relationships between them. In Anuradhapura after the program, participants felt they can and should live together with all communities. Participants of the activities understood the need to work together and understand each other’s culture and traditions. In Kandy, the activities resulted in good cooperation between different ethnic groups. In Mannar all youth worked together to achieve the project objectives. In Matara project activities helped build relationships between different groups.

Respondents of the survey were asked if they had friends from other ethnic groups before the project (2013) and if they have friends from other ethnic groups now (2017). The number of respondents that said that they have a friend from other ethnic groups increased in all communities: by 22.2% among Muslims, by 10.7% among Tamils and by 4.2% among Sinhalese.

They were also asked if they worked together with those from other ethnic groups (in 2013) and if they work together with those of other ethnic groups now (2017). This also showed a big increase in Muslim communities and smaller increase among Sinhala and Tamil communities. Numbers increased by 26% among Muslims, 3.4% among Sinhalese and 3.3% among Tamils.

Table 4: Improved relationships among different ethnic groups

	Tamil		Sinhala		Muslim		Total		Control group	
	Yes	%	Yes	%	Yes	%	Yes	%	Yes	%
Friends from other ethnic groups (2013)	127	68.3	195	78.9	58	71.6	380	73.9	89	59.7
Friends from other ethnic groups (2017)	147	79.0	202	83.1	76	93.8	425	83.3	99	66.9
Work together with other ethnic groups (2013)	90	48.6	190	77.6	47	58.0	327	64.0	79	53.4
Work together with other ethnic groups (2017)	96	51.9	197	81.1	68	84.0	361	70.9	92	70.9

In response to both questions, increases among the Muslim community were significantly higher than the difference in the other communities. This could indicate that Muslims (that were previously more segregated) are making an extra effort to integrate and collaborate with other communities to mitigate the anti-Muslim sentiment that prevails in the country in

recent times. Among the control group, respondents having friends from other ethnic groups were fewer than those from the beneficiary group.

When asked to rate the contribution of activities in strengthening relationships between ethnic and religious groups 77.4% of the participants of activities organized by women’s groups (45.8 + 31.6) and 72.7% (48.8 + 23.9) of participants of activities organized by youth groups rated the contribution as good or very good.

On average, participants of activities organized by women’s groups made an additional 14.3 friends, while participants of activities organized by youth groups made an additional 5.96 friends during the project period. When respondents were asked if they had contacted their friends after the activity, 72.6% of participants of activities organized by women’s groups and 61.5% of participants of activities organized by youth groups said “yes” they had contacted their new friends after the activity.

When asked how the outreach activities helped them and their communities, participants gave the following responses:

Table 5: Contribution of outreach activities to reconciliation

	Women’s Group	Youth Group
Created awareness about co-existence and reconciliation	127 79.9%	166 77.9%
Improved relationships between different religious and ethnic groups in the communities	76 47.8%	114 53.5%
Improved skills (of participating youth and women)	60 37.7%	79 37.1%
Helped to find employment ⁶	35 22.0%	8 3.8%
Socially empowered the community	50 31.4%	39 18.3%
Developed linkages with other ethnic and religious groups from other areas	53 33.3%	71 33.3%

80% of participants of activities organized by women’s groups and 78% of participants of activities organized by youth groups said the outreach activities created awareness about coexistence. 47% of the participants of activities organized by women’s groups and 53.5% of participants of activities organized by youth groups said activities improved relationships between different religious and ethnic groups in the communities. Less than 40% of both groups of respondents said that activities improved their skills, helped them find employment, socially empowered the community or developed linkages with other ethnic and religious groups from other areas.

Respondents of the survey were also asked if they agreed with the statement that “people of different faiths in my community come together for joint celebrations of religious and cultural festivals”. 82.7% of participants of activities organized by women’s groups either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This number was significantly lower among participants of activities organized by youth groups at 67.8%, which was very close to the opinion of control groups (64.6%). Assuming most of the participants of activities organized by youth

⁶ Even though employment and social empowerment does not directly relate to reconciliation, the question was raised since networks and personal contacts are some of the channels through which many persons find employment. It was included as an option, assuming that some of the youth participants had been able to secure employment through their newfound contacts from the activities.

groups are younger people, it can be inferred that the younger generation does not perceive many opportunities for interaction between different communities.

A similar result was received when respondents were asked if they agree with the statement: "People from different groups in my community have many opportunities to meet". 75.5% of participants of activities organized by women's groups and 72.1% of participants of activities organized by youth groups agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing from among control groups was lower at 59.5%.

The above findings indicate that outreach activities contributed significantly to strengthening individual and group relationships between ethnic and religious groups in the five districts. Even in multi ethnic communities, different groups living in isolation from each other developed relationships through the activities. Communities were brought together in organizing and implementing activities and worked together in activities such as *Shramadana* (cleaning up preschools in Anuradhapura), forum theatre, peace through art (Kandy) and learning Sinhala (in Mannar). It can be surmised that the social relationships developed through these activities will be sustained beyond the project period.

4.1.4. What behavior or perception changes resulted from the Sikka Team drama at individual/group/societal level

Below are some of the key findings from the viewership survey:

- 18.9% said they watched it very often
- 43.6% said they "liked" the program more because it was about cricket
- 31.3% said they liked it because it involved inter-personal relationships and the need for reconciliation
- 55.1% agreed that the program highlighted that an individual's ethnic origin plays a key role in forming and maintaining societal relationships.
- 49.4% said that the TV series highlighted that to be successful, it was important to stabilize unity and equality among different socio-economic groups within a community.
- 46% of respondents indicated that one of the challenges faced by Suresh was that he had to refrain from disclosing his real identity.
- 68% of respondents discussed the issues highlighted in the program with friends, 44.7% discussed with members of their family and 18.4% discussed it with colleagues.
- 24.9% said they experienced a change when asked if they thought any change took place in relation to any stereotypes or preconceived notions that they may have had towards a particular group in society.
- 10.2% indicated that the TV series gave them *a positive outlook about the Tamil community*.

Feedback from viewer group sessions conducted by SFCG indicate that viewers appreciated discussion of topical issues through drama. They provided the following feedback:

- This drama offers simple awareness for complex issues.
- Talks about different socio-economic classes in society. Refreshingly artistic.
- Talks about racism, poverty, youth spirit and determination.
- It's a story about determination and courage and how to overcome obstacles through unity.
- A story which explores inter-ethnic cohabitation about multiculturalism.
- The concept of interesting and inter-religious cohabitation is something new to us. We are from a predominantly Sinhala District and the concept of love and inter-racial marriages are a somewhat new experience to us.

- The youth groups' discussion focused on the subplot of the interreligious relationship and the romance between the young lovers who hail from two different ethnic groups; while the 40+ group discussed the lead character (father figure) and his struggles to make ends meet. (Source: Sikka Team Viewer Circles Discussions).

Hence, we can conclude that even though many did not view the program regularly, those that did view it, said they changed their understanding, perceptions and behavior.

When asked if the drama realistically portrayed the current situation in the country, 25 of 30 key informants agreed that it did. However, some cautioned that certain areas could have been handled better. For example, the love story between a Muslim girl and a boy from another ethnic group (originally thought to be Sinhala but subsequently revealed to be a Tamil) was not very well received in the East where a majority of the population is Muslim. One of the key informants said: *some parts like the Sinhala, Muslim affair should have been handled carefully. Muslim culture in the remote areas will not accept such relationships.*

When asked about their favorite characters from the drama, 9 of 30 key informants said they liked Suresh, the protagonist who is a Tamil, but pretends to be Sinhala. Having fled the war in the North, his wife was a rebel fighter who fought against the Sri Lanka army. He was liked because he sacrificed his home to bring up his child in a safe environment. Despite his negative experiences he did not have any conflict with Sinhala communities, he had leadership qualities and faced challenges well. Six of 30 key informants said they liked Jonty, Suresh's son, a talented cricketer who overcame poverty and challenging circumstances to become a star player. They liked him for his strong character and the fact that he crossed cultural barriers by falling in love with a girl from a different community. One person said that they liked the girl Shana because she went beyond her cultural limitations/boundaries by having an affair with a boy from a different ethnic group. Among respondents of the survey, 32% said they liked Jonty, 21% chose Suresh and 18% said they liked Shiva.

With regard to inclusion and diversity between different ethnic groups, key informants said participants expressed their interest in the drama and recognized that a solution could be found through sport (metaphorically portraying collective action). It was mentioned that the program reflected the culture, ethnicity and economic status of different groups and showed how cooperation could lead to achieving targets (when the three communities targeted one goal). It was suggested to use actors of different ethnic groups to portray the characters from those ethnic groups to make the show more realistic and credible. Observations were made that even the abridged version of the Sikka Team was too long (90 minutes) and it was difficult for people to stand and watch a program that long in the open air.

With regard to influencing positive change in **attitudes** towards other ethnic and religious groups, key informants observed that it was *important to develop a united identity*. The program showcased different cultures and religions and showed that when they work together they achieve success. The show planted the notion of positive attitudes toward those from other communities. One person observed that the message was not strong enough to influence positive change, but the follow-up activities were able to do so.

10 of the key informants said they changed their perceptions after seeing the drama. They learned that everyone should respect each other, and one should take responsibility to create awareness about such matters. Children should be sensitized on cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, tolerance and mutual respect. Another mentioned that Suresh's statement to Jonty about Vaduwee (Suresh's wife, and Jonty's mother) *"She might have valued freedom more than anything"* - changed his perception about people/soldiers that supported or joined the LTTE.

Many agreed that the program induced positive change in **behavior** towards other ethnic and religious groups. The program promoted the idea that 1) we are all Sri Lankan regardless of ethnicity, 2) we should respect each other's cultures, 3) we should not ignore other ethnic groups when problems arise, 4) we should not have negative attitudes towards other ethnic groups and 5) sports can be used to generate positive change. Only one person said the impact of the program was not strong enough.

With regard to behavior towards those from other religious and ethnic groups, key informants said they cultivated more respect towards other cultures, changed their perceptions, developed mutual respect, recognized and respected all religions and developed better understanding about concepts in other religions (example: Halal). A majority of them (22 of 30 key informants) said the program promoted mutual respect between communities. They agreed that the program created an opportunity to develop mutual respect and that the entire drama attempted to reflect such mutual respect between different groups. The key informant from ONUR said that compared to other programs which are mono-ethnic, this program promoted positive change towards other ethnic groups and among people who watched it. Representatives from women's groups said they learned that working together they can achieve more than if they work alone. Those in Kandy mentioned that actors should have been taken from the same ethnic groups as the characters they represent. In Mannar women said that it helped them understand that any blame should not be placed on individuals without proper evidence, otherwise it creates conflict. Those in Matara believed that the program was sensitive to current needs.

Similar feedback was provided by the representatives from the youth groups who said that talents should be respected regardless of what community one is from. Those who have skills should be assigned the responsibilities (Ampara). In Kandy, they mentioned that a strong relationship without considering ethnicity or religion can result in wins. Others said that all members of a community must work together. Discrimination destroys cooperation and harmony, and proper leadership is important to guide society (Mannar and Matara). Many persons liked that it was a love story.

When respondents of the survey were asked about their main lesson/take-away from the drama, 21% of viewers said unity, 11% said the importance of working together, 9% said ethnic harmony and 7% recalled the message that "everyone is the same". Determination and team work were mentioned by 3% of the viewers as learning points. With regard to perceptions they said they now perceived everyone to be "equal" and that they should treat one another as equals. The importance of attitude change was also mentioned. Fifty percent of total program viewers recommended it to others.

The project was not able to generate the desired results through social media despite many attempts and the number of 'likes' on the Sikka Team Facebook page being over 5000. The expected dialogue around the issues of reconciliation did not take place as envisaged. An analysis of the "likes" for the Facebook page indicates that for the issues and updates posted the number of likes were very few (mostly less than 10). However, when the YouTube clips or episodes of the program were shared, there were more likes (378 for episode 5, 587 for episode 4, 163 for episode 3, and 206 for episode 2). When a promotional clip was shared, it gathered 929 likes. This indicates that people are willing to express their likes to the program itself, but do not want to get involved in issues surrounding issues such as reconciliation. This could be because Facebook is an open platform and sharing views often gets negative responses from those with opposing viewpoints. Even though social media is touted as a popular tool to reach the masses (especially the younger generation), experience from the Sikka Team project indicates that much more has to be done to garner continued engagement by members to retain their interest and get them engaged and contributing to discussions.

4.1.5. What unexpected positive or negative results did the project lead to?

Key informants from implementing partners mentioned that community members contributed to activities and actively participated. Audiences for activities such as forum theatre and peace through music were unexpectedly higher than expected by the organizers. Responses provided by participants of outreach activities was mostly positive. One key informant in Mannar cited a case when they implemented the forum theater at the bus stand. Bus drivers and conductors supported the activity by minimizing the sound (of horns and buses starting). These changes are significant in the local context since bus drivers and conductors are part of a specific sub-culture that is usually not receptive to concepts such as reconciliation. They are mostly interested in making profits, running buses on time, and getting as many passengers as possible etc. For such groups to be supportive of the youth group was unexpected and appreciated by the organizing groups.

Positive reactions such as these are encouraging and indicate there is a conducive environment in which activities such as forum theatre can be used to promote reconciliatory ideas among communities.

Muslim women and girls are usually segregated especially in the Eastern Province and in other locations with predominantly Muslim populations. They are segregated from male counterparts within their own community even during social occasions such as weddings and funerals. Within this context, the youth group in Ampara was unexpectedly surprised when several Muslim girls from different schools participated in their leadership program (and community leaders encouraged them to participate).

During the forum theatre, some of the audience came forward and gave positive comments to the program signifying that communities are receptive to the messages of reconciliation and peace building imparted. Future programs can build on these experiences.

Along with positives there were also some negative reactions such as in Matara where the youth group faced several challenges to implement their activities (see case study on peace through music insert). Some representatives of the women's group in Akurana in the Kandy district reported that they faced negative comments about "working with Muslims". Some members of the community said they worked with Muslims only to economically benefit from "rich Muslim traders".

PEACE THROUGH MUSIC

The *Heena Thotupala* youth group in Kamburupitiya in Matara came up with the idea of using music to promote reconciliation. The group wrote 10 songs which were sung by a group of young musicians from the area after which a panel of reviewers critiqued the songs. The event was held at the Upali Wiewardena hall in Matara. Special invitations were extended to religious leaders. Specific target groups who could contribute to a meaningful exchange of idea were invited. The program was promoted on social media promising to be a "different experience". The activity faced many challenges including attracting audiences not used to such concepts, obtaining approval from the police and other authorities for carrying out public events, not getting the support of elders in the area and having to carry out all the activities themselves. They also had to face the threats of some factions loyal to the previous government who perceived such concepts as donor driven and promoting the agendas of the NGOs. To address these concerns the name of the show had to be changed. An owner of a hall when approached said: *I'm not going to give my hall for a program that is favorable to the Tamil people, better to find another place...*

4.2. Peace effectiveness

4.2.1. Has there been any indication of reduced stereotypes and prejudices at the societal level in the selected locations?

According to key informants, when conducting activities people were sensitized on the customs of other communities. In Kandy, for example, when providing meals for school children who were engaged in drawing a picture together, the organizers learned that Hindu participants needed vegetarian meals on Fridays as they were fasting. In Ampara key

informants reported that after the activities the youth started to visit each other in their homes. This indicates that they developed a social relationship with each other, leading to better understanding about the “other”. In Kandy, it was noted that participants of outreach activities shared their food with each other and even dressed in the other ethnic group’s traditional dresses. As a group, they learned to accept each other’s culture and traditions. It can be hoped that this would eventually lead to reduced stereotyping and increased inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim groups in the Districts.

The women’s group in Anuradhapura said there was better understanding between different community members. Previously, they knew people from other communities only by sight. However, after these programs they know each other better and talk to each other when they meet. In Kandy, the women’s groups said the relationship between Sinhala and Tamil students continues, they even attended a women’s group member’s mother-in-law’s funeral. In Mannar, the women’s group agreed there was reduced stereotyping.

In Anuradhapura, it was noted that the Sinhala village was visited by Muslim traders only for business purposes prior to the project. However, after these activities the community has a better relationship with Muslim traders even though the participation of Muslim women remains low. Muslim community leaders were thankful that such an activity was conducted. In Kandy, teams observed that cooperation increased and groups maintained contact with each other. Oftentimes, those from one ethnic group perceive those from another ethnic group as “different” and there are certain stereotypes associated with each ethnic group. For example, Muslims are perceived to be clever traders while their women are seen to be conservative (due to their dress-code and segregation). However, through activities such as cleaning of the Muslim and Sinhala preschool in Anuradhapura, some of these perceptions have changed. Representatives from the groups mentioned that they developed connections with the Muslim women that participated, and realized they have more in common than they thought. Similarly, the ‘peace through art’ activity in Kandy brought children from all three communities together, supported by their parents and teachers. Before this, some of them did not meet or speak to those from another ethnic group. Even parents developed linkages with each other due to the project. They became more sensitive towards the culture and traditions of other groups.

PEACE THROUGH ART

In Ambakotte, Kandy there is a mix of culture and religion when it comes to the population. 24 children representing all communities were brought together to draw one picture representing all of their cultures. Through the activity children from each community were able to experience the traditions and culture of the other communities. Muslims were provided Halaal food and Hindus were provided vegetarian meals on Friday. The drawing was unveiled in front of a massive audience including parents, teachers and community members. The experience brought together not only the participating students but the entire community including families, other school children, teachers, parents and other villagers. children are the foundation of our nation, we have the responsibility of giving them the correct message to bring about a peaceful coexistence...

Thanuja,
Women’s group leader,
Ambakotte, Kandy

4.2.2. Are there indications towards a societal transformation that embraces diversity and mutual respect?

Representatives from both women’s and youth groups were asked if participants of the activities in their community embraced diversity and mutual respect more than they did before, as an outcome of the activities. They appeared to agree that there were indications of societal transformations. However, none of the groups could give examples of such incidents.

In Anuradhapura, they said that there was greater awareness, while in Matara they said there was a slight changes in attitudes.

SFCG believes that communities which had been isolated from each other have been brought together through outreach activities implemented by the project. People of different ethnic groups and religions participate in each other's social lives, which is unusual in terms in many communities. For example, in areas like Kandy and Ampara that are home to all ethnic groups, they are segregated geographically based on ethnicity. Therefore, in the current context of hate and ethnic polarization, activities like visiting each other's religious places create better understanding. Interest has been generated among participating community members, women's and youth groups and implementing partners to continue such activities.

According to one of the consultants that worked closely with the project, using drama was an effective mechanism to create social change: *It is a very good intervention promoting relevant topics, especially using drama to promote and create a dialogue about a particular topic... I believe it has changed perceptions among many people and their way of thinking about various ethnicities and religions* - Imran Nafeer, Facilitator, Ideas Consultancy.

Experiences from the project indicate that most community members are receptive to concepts of reconciliation as evidenced by high participation and commitment of the general public towards outreach activities. SFCG can build on such experiences and replicate some of the activities, and this could lead to the expected societal transformations.

Outreach activities were one-off events that managed to bring together different ethnic and religious groups at a common forum. It is ambitious to expect that such an event would lead to societal transformations on a larger scale. What was done through these activities was the planting of a seed, the creation of a base on which SFCG can build. Participants and organizers of the activities now have a better understanding of one another's culture, traditions etc. They are better aware of concepts related to reconciliation, understand and accept the need to come together, and are willing to do so. However, more needs to be done, especially in a country context of mistrust between ethnic groups, amidst cases of racial tensions, hatred towards other ethnic groups, and attacks reported on churches and mosques. There are also groups and elements promoting intolerance, especially towards the minority communities. These extremist elements need to be addressed and engaged if true societal transformation is to take place.

PEACE THROUGH STREET DRAMA

We have done the street drama with the participation of youth, it was directed by Mr. Uthayan, who is a well-known writer who had won many awards. People from the surrounding villages participated, they were an eager audience and we got good feedback from them, they welcomed our efforts. After the drama there is better understanding among them, some of them come forward to solve issues through communicating with each other instead of blowing them out of proportion like they did before... people cannot be changed during a short period of time. Change takes time. I believe that now that we have a clear understanding and respect towards other communities, religions or cultures it will be easier to work together... drama is only a tool for creating awareness on reconciliation. In my experience, this process must be started at school level. If it is inbuilt in children, it will be move easily toward reconciliation, through their families and gradually to the community.

Mary Madonna,
Kathankullam,
Mannar

4.2.3. Has there been any indication of increased collaboration among women and youth across dividing lines?

As stated in the context, 30 years of violence have driven deep divisions between communities. Tainted by mistrust and fear, collaboration or working together to address issues is a rare phenomenon in the country. As a result of project activities women's groups said there was increased collaboration in their communities compared to previous years. Groups in Kandy mentioned that some local government officers who had never participated in such programs now want to carry out more such programs. Representatives of youth groups also agreed that there was now more collaboration. Groups in Anuradhapura said that the activities helped them meet more people from other communities, while the groups in Kandy said there was increased collaboration between youth of different ethnic groups even though participation of Muslim women was low.

Key informants reported how previously there were some misunderstandings about other religions, but outreach activities helped mitigate some of these misunderstandings. Even during the initial stages of developing peace through art activities, there were some misunderstandings between the organizing women's group members and their leader. The leader of the group was a Tamil lady and she mentioned that other members questioned why the leadership was given to a Tamil person (much like members of the cricket team in the Sikka team program, who question the appointment of Shiva as the team captain merely because he is Tamil). However, by the end of the activity the women became good friends. The relationships developed through outreach activities between those from different religious and ethnic groups will continue.

5. Findings - Coordination

5.1. How was the coordination between SFCG and its stakeholders in implementing the project?

Key informants were asked to rate the overall coordination and organization of the program, on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Seventy percent said it was either very good or good. A representative from ONUR mentioned that SFCG collaborated with them well and that ONUR provided support for initiatives taking the program to Government offices in the Districts. Implementing partners concur that the coordination between SFCG and partners was positive.

Overall, the coordination and the management was excellent when working with the grass root level there will be many issues to face, this should be realized - M A Arzath Areef, Deputy Manager Sri Lanka Unites.

Representatives of women's groups in Anuradhapura said they worked with local CBOs and Women's Rural Development Societies (WRDSs) through an effective mechanism to reach grassroots level communities. However, they said that participation of local government authorities was limited, which hindered program activities. Women's group representatives believed that if local government authorities had been engaged in project activities, there would have been a better chance of sustaining such activities beyond the project period (since the support of the local government authorities can be harnessed to implement similar interventions in the future). In Kandy, the women's groups mentioned that coordination between local government and communities has improved as a result of project activities.

Their credibility has also improved among the police, *Grama Sevaka*⁷ (GS), Divisional Secretary (DS), office staff and religious leaders. Developing such a network between community groups and local government authorities will ensure project interventions are supported and continued beyond the project period. Local government authorities can support community groups to sustain project interventions, hence their support is an important element in project coordination. For example, in locations that the DS office supported facilitated discussions, the project has enjoyed greater success. In Kandy for example, the national integration officer at the DS office supported the implementation of activities at DS level. In Mannar and Matara a good relationship existed between SFCG and stakeholders including project implementing partners, local government authorities and women's and youth groups.

Youth groups in Ampara said there was excellent coordination in the Ampara district. Representatives from SFCG joined the inauguration of activities. It gave them greater confidence and added weight to the program. In Anuradhapura, youth groups said that there was good collaboration and coordination between the religious leaders in the village even though government representatives were not involved. 200 people were involved, they needed sounds and other facilities which were all provided by Don Bosco at very nominal rates (LKR 2,500 for something which would otherwise cost LKR 25,000). In Kandy, the coordination was good even though some activities (publication of the newspaper) were delayed. In Mannar, the coordination was generally good, groups would have appreciated if they were made aware of the budgets available. In Matara, they said that there was good coordination from the beginning.

Project participants were asked to rate the overall coordination of the program on a scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). The majority of participants of the activities organized by women's groups - 71.2% - rated the overall coordination as good (48.5%), or very good (32.7%). Similarly, 63.7% of the participants from activities organized by youth groups said it was either good (34%), or very good (29.7%). The ratings provided for activities organized by women's groups were generally higher than ratings provided for activities organized by youth groups.

Overall the coordination between SFCG and its stakeholders was positive across all levels from national level (with ONUR) to the Divisional Secretariat level. The project worked through two implementing partners that in turn worked through local grassroots level women's and youth groups to reach communities. Responses provided by women's and youth groups indicate that there have been some challenges in this approach - such as miscommunication between implementing partners and women's/youth groups, and lack of transparency. Sometimes the groups were not informed about the available budgets for activities and they overspent. Despite these challenges, women's and youth groups indicated that their close ties to communities contributed to the success of activities. Had SFCG implemented the project directly with women's and youth groups instead of working through implementing partners (Sarvodaya/Sri Lanka Unites) some of the bottlenecks related to the flow of information and resources could have been avoided.

5.2. What were the challenges, if any, and how did SFCG and partners overcome them?

⁷ Grama Sevaka - local government official at village level, GS division is the smallest administrative unit in Sri Lanka.

Key informants⁸ including the two implementing partners and others engaged in organizing activities at field level were asked about challenges faced by the project and how these challenges were overcome. Their responses are provided in the table below:

⁸ The key informants were those that had been involved in organizing activities including implementing partners at District level, community leaders, religious leaders etc.

Table 6: Challenges faced and how they were overcome

What challenges did you face in organizing/participating in these activities?	How did you overcome these challenges?
Faced difficulties in getting authorization since we worked with school students, it was difficult to get the youth (from the coastal areas) to participate.	Used personal links like religious leaders and contacted the Zonal Director of Education to obtain authorization and convince school students to participate
Bringing the participants on time to one place for activities, having misunderstanding within the communities.	Created awareness and persuaded participants to have a positive mindset
Language barriers and getting the participation of youth as most young people and their parents prefer that they go out to work.	Utilized translators when needed. Created awareness and used educated youth to do so.
Some community members were not willing to participate.	Approached mosque committee, police and church committee to gather the people.
Difficult to meet religious and community leaders.	Frequently visited the places of religious worship and met with community leaders.
Low cooperation from some members of society.	Motivated them to join and communicated regularly with them.
Find a location for the activity, low participation of Muslim community.	None.
Difficulties in getting approval from principals of schools to ensure participation of children.	Convinced principals that we can change attitudes and mindsets through these activities.
Getting the participation of Tamil and Muslim community.	Used networks and contacts of National Youth Services Council, Sarvodaya and others.
Getting community participation, coordination between different religious groups.	Obtained the support of religious leaders.
Change of attitudes from estate sector Tamil community was difficult.	Created awareness about cultural differences.
Selection of actors and actresses from all ethnic groups.	Suitable actors and actresses were selected with a few from different ethnic groups.
Language barrier was a problem.	Used those that could speak many languages as translators.
Voluntary participation was a real challenge. Most didn't participate in activities. There were people with extreme ideas. Some people belonging to a certain ethnic group argued that they are better than others. The budget was not sufficient for some activities. We have incurred additional expenses for some activities. The time factor was also a real challenge.	Tried to overcome challenges through discussion and communication.

SFCG can use some of the coping mechanisms used by implementing partners in overcoming similar challenges when implementing future projects. Some of the suggestions made by key informants have also been incorporated into the report's recommendations chapter.

Women's groups faced difficulties with travel and transport as participants had to travel far from their homes to get to the locations where activities were conducted (Anuradhapura). Other challenges included prejudice from community members and lack of adequate

resources including financial resources (Kandy), and lack of support by some community members (Mannar).

Youth groups mentioned limited budgets (Ampara), some community members not wanting to mingle with other ethnic groups (Anuradhapura), language barriers (Kandy) and expenses on transport (Mannar) as challenges. One way of overcoming the language barrier is learning of one another's languages. An outreach activity was carried out in Mannar where Tamil and Muslim women came together to learn Sinhala. According to the teacher, the classes helped create a relationship between these two communities.

Language classes should be conducted to create relationships between communities
J S Nayana, Sinhala teacher, Mannar.

The challenges SFCG faced in implementing this project included difficulties encountered during the scripting process. The process took much longer than initially anticipated since local writers found it difficult to agree on conceptual matters related to the scripting process. They were also not used to working with donor-driven projects that required an important message be built into the program.

Lack of an integrated marketing system was another challenge faced by SFCG. It was difficult to market to the sector they were targeting, considering the limited resources available. Other challenges included the broadcaster's exclusive telecasting rights issues that prevented airing the program at other locations. In implementing outreach activities, they have faced challenges in some places in the North where there was resistance to "bringing Sinhala things to the north". In the Eastern location of Ampara, there was reluctance among the Muslim community to accept the storyline of a Muslim girl having a love affair with a Sinhala boy.

Challenges were faced by SFCG in garnering the participating of female participants in activities that required them to be away from their homes (such as the residential workshops). It was extremely difficult to engage women especially from among the Muslim and Tamil communities, and the project was sometimes redesigned to accommodate these conditions.

Working and coordinating with artistes also came with challenges related to conflicting time schedules and non-availability. Many artistes work on multiple projects which limits their focus and commitment. During post-production when their services were needed on a different level (especially during the marketing phase), they could not be engaged since they had taken up other projects. However, SFCG managed to maintain a good working relationship with the Director who remained available to support follow-up activities.

6. Findings - Sustainability

6.1. Have there been any independent initiatives that promote and respect across divides as a result of the project?

The evaluation team could not find evidence of any independent initiatives implemented by the implementing partners beside the project activities. Even though some groups planned on continuing (such as publishing a second edition of the newsletter), no such initiatives had taken place at the time of carrying out the evaluation.

Women's groups in Anuradhapura did not carry out any follow up activities. They were provided with a DVD player but not given a DVD of the program. Once they receive the latter they plan to showcase the program among more audiences. In Kandy one of the groups said they have plans to conduct a similar program at a Muslim school, the principal of Zahira College (a Muslim school) participated in the previous event and invited them to conduct a

similar event at his school. Women's groups want to carry out activities at their local *Daham Pasala* (Sunday School). In Mannar no follow-up activities have been carried out. In Matara, some *Shramadana* activities were organized with people from different castes participating.

Youth groups in Ampara said they plan to replicate the "be the Change" activity at school level and have scheduled more programs on leadership. Students who participated in SFCG supported activities would provide their support for this activity. They also planned to carry out more forum theater and develop a short film, and have laid the groundwork for this. No follow-up activities were organized by youth groups in Anuradhapura. In Kandy, discussions were held for conducting a *Pada Yathra* (a foot march pilgrimage engaging all communities). Maintenance of the flower pots that resulted from project activities were taken over by the local trader's association. The principle of Kengalle Tamil School who participated in one of the activities said he would like to volunteer to teach Tamil to Sinhala communities and to maintain the relationship initiated by the activities. One of the youth groups that published a bilingual newsletter is preparing to develop a second edition without project support. In Mannar even though they planned to carry out *Shramadana* activities every three months, nothing has taken place. *Shramadana* activities were carried out by youth groups, with the participation of persons of different castes in Matara.

SFCG including the regional director were asked how this project compared with similar projects implemented in Sri Lanka and the region. The TEAM project was an initiative that built on the experiences of similar projects from around the world in over 18 countries that involve the use of sport (football, cricket) and media to serve as a metaphor for existing ethnic and religious divisions and foster dialogue on reconciliation. The Regional Director who has been involved in seven similar interventions around the world offered the following observation:

My sense is that this was quite a successful initiative; the first thing that I would look at is audience reach and whether the show hit the market well. By all indications, it really did. (We had cases where the show was a bit of a dud and didn't take off. In others, it was touted as the best show in the history of that country. This was at the top end). I also felt that the messaging was powerful, aligned nicely to what we were seeking to achieve with our broader strategy. Despite the challenges that we faced in making the show, I felt that we had a top-notch product which was popular and caused a shift in audience attitudes.

The idea that it was an innovative concept is echoed by the representative of ONUR who observed that the Sikka Team program mainstreamed inter-ethnic relationship into day-to-day life. It was innovative because usually teledramas showcase those from one ethnicity only.

6.2. Are there any indications that the project initiatives may survive or continue to operate independently after the project phase-out?

Responses provided by key informants, especially those from the implementing partners, Sarvodaya and Sri Lanka Unites indicate that even though there was a willingness and even some plans of continuing, none of the partners could provide concrete examples of follow-up activities or independent initiatives resulting from the project.

Representatives of women's groups said they invited those from other communities for their religious activities (Anuradhapura). Those in Kandy said they are considering the implementation of activities that will bring economic benefit to participants (i.e. livelihood development initiatives). In Mannar they said that even though they are ready to implement

similar activities, they do not have funds to continue. Representatives from youth groups said they hope to show the Sikka Team drama among their communities, publish the newsletter quarterly and promote participation in each other's social and cultural events (Kandy). None of the groups implemented any independent initiatives at the time of the evaluation. Despite strong willingness, lack of required funds presents a hurdle.

Discussions with SFCG indicate that there has been interest among other TV channels to produce similar programs and SFCG has been approached by another donor interested in implementing similar projects. The Office of National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) have taken up disseminating the abridged version of Sikka Team among government officers via the DS offices in the Districts. Discussions are ongoing with the Ministry of National Integration to streamline this process. All 13 episodes are on YouTube for viewing by those interested. SFCG also started the Paalama website under the project. The website hosts the abridged version online and a blog that promotes dialogue on building better relationships between different ethnic and religious groups (see <http://paalama.lk>). In addition, SFCG has also distributed DVD players and a DVD abridged version of the program among schools and other local authorities including DS offices. The facilitation guide (an open source document) is also being distributed, and can be used by implementing partners wanting to continue the discussion.

When asked if they would consider producing a second season of the Sikka Team program, SFCG responded that they did not have any such plans in place. However, SFCG Sri Lanka is interested in using the same concepts on the TEAM for future program development. The regional director pointed out that if they could get funding they would focus on *working more closely with the writers to get their buy-in for the final product and on focusing more on marketing effectively, with more substantial budgeting for marketing.*

ONUR is also exploring the possibility of using the program in schools. ONUR perceives it as an effective channel that breaks taboos and takes relevant issues to the mainstream. The facilitation guide will also be disseminated by ONUR when they introduce the program to schools and the "Sahodara Pasa" program (a program carried out by ONUR with the aim of promoting reconciliation at school level).

Follow up student exchange camps titled "Sahodara Pasa - Sahodara Padasalai" were held last week in Batticaloa bringing together schools in the Eastern and Southern provinces, which have been paired to continue reconciliation activities amongst the provinces. Another camp was concluded in Central Province under the same initiative for the diverse student population within the province. This programme will also be held between schools of the Western and Northern provinces, and between the other provinces in early 2017. At these camps, hundreds of students representing diverse ethnicities, come together for a 5 day residential camp where they will learn to live together, about diverse subjects related to, engage in activities and plan for an Action Plan to follow up before heading to their respective communities to work towards reconciliation. A teacher education program runs in parallel with all these programmes being conducted by the trained provincial facilitators. Source: <http://www.onur.gov.lk>

ONUR has also requested SFCG to provide them with some international films that promote reconciliation dubbed in the local languages. These can be screened in schools with worksheets and other teacher training resources so it can be rolled out to the students. ONUR suggested that it would have been good to have short clips under 2 minutes for circulation on social media. It was felt that the marketing and dissemination of the program among the public could have been better. Support to and discussions with ONUR at national level may lead to some of the activities and interventions introduced by the project (i.e.

facilitated discussions) being taken up, replicated and disseminated throughout the country. ONUR is the national body working to promote reconciliation, and can play a key role in sustaining and building on experiences of the project.

7. Conclusions & Recommendations

The conclusions and lessons learned are organized under five main sub-topics. Related recommendations are also provided based on the conclusions and lessons learned. The recommendations are highlighted under each sub-topic.

7.1. Development and airing of TV series

SFCG recognizes the need for better planning in the process of scripting, sequencing and marketing the Sikka Team program. Marketing could not be carried out as expected and they could not manage to generate as much interest as expected before the program went on air. Had the marketing strategy been more integrated, they could have reached an even larger audience. The strategy of developing a commercial product with popular actors using a popular game (i.e. cricket) was commendable. However, due to weaknesses in marketing the program and competition with programs on other channels, the program may not have reached a large audience, this is evidenced by the fact that out of the survey respondents only 20% watched the program when it aired on Rupavahini.

This idea of promoting the program in a better manner is also echoed by the director of the program: *This kind of product should be launched with more publicity* - Pradeep Dharmadasa, Director Sikka Team. One of the implementing partners suggests that the actors and director should be engaged in promoting outreach activities: Some cast members, including the writer or the director could have been used in outreach activities to strengthen the projection of the TV series - Ramzi Zaindeen, Sri Lanka Unites

The former SFCG project manager observed that the program should have been produced in both local languages since sub-titles or dubbing takes away from the flow of the program. However, this isn't easy since it would require double the resources to produce the program in both Sinhala and Tamil. Adequate time must be factored in to ensure that a suitable distribution channel and time slot are identified, as engaging a channel to air the program takes a significant amount of time. Sometimes airing the program during prime time may be counterproductive since the audience is fragmented, as viewers have equally interesting programs airing on other channels during prime time.

Observations were made by the implementing partners that even the abridged version of the Sikka Team was too long (90 minutes) and it was difficult to get people to stand and watch a program of that length in the open air. Hence, SFCG must consider developing programs of shorter length (video clips, short films etc.) when doing so with a view to engage the public in discussion.

Recommendations:

- Implement a more integrated marketing program to promote the drama prior to airing so that greater interest is generated among potential viewers.
- Consider producing the program in both languages so viewers get a firsthand experience rather than being distracted with dubbing and/or sub-titles.
- Develop shorter programs that are able to generate and retain public interest at airings.

7.2. Implementation of outreach activities

SFCG Sri Lanka agrees that identifying and engaging better implementing partners and improving SFCGs field presence are important lessons learned from implementing this project. Discussions with some of the women's and youth groups indicated there were

weaknesses in the flow of information and finances from SFCG through implementing partners to the grassroots level groups. Some women's groups in Kandy spent their own funds and did not know how/if they could get these funds reimbursed. Some of these issues can be mitigated if SFCG can engage grassroots level organizations directly instead of going through implementing partners, since the groups can then communicate with SFCG directly.

The experience of implementing outreach activities indicates that some groups found it difficult to engage more segregated segments of the community (i.e. Muslim women). Special programs can be organized to ensure the engagement of such segregated members of community. Customizing programs to suit such groups could be one way of ensuring this. For example, conducting initial programs only for women, until the women are engaged and invested in the process can be one strategy to consider. Creating awareness among such communities about the importance of integration and ensuring that the programs would not in any way hinder or harm religious sensibilities can be another. Religious leaders can be used to take this message to the community since they are often perceived as community leaders to whom the community turns for advice and guidance.

Experience with outreach activities that engaged school children were seen to be very effective because parents and teachers also got involved, making it a communal activity. Creating the painting in Ambakote, Kandy was a case in point where the entire community was engaged. Using school children is effective because they learn the importance of concepts such as ethnic tolerance and collaboration from a young age. Children will use this for the rest of their lives and also take the message to their parents and communities. The same goes for youth groups.

Recommendations

- Implement outreach activities directly through grassroots community organizations instead of working through implementing partners.
- Get the endorsement of religious leaders for programs so they become more acceptable to communities.
- Encourage and engage school children so that entire communities (parents, teachers) are brought together and learn from one another.

7.3. Program implementation

When conducting workshops (especially residential workshops), low participation from women is expected since members from some communities (Muslim) don't want to send women out of their homes. In order to mitigate this, programs can be conducted in the communities (non-residential, with participants returning home at the end of each day) instead of in other areas.

Overall ratings provided for activities organized by youth groups was lower than ratings provided by activities organized by women's groups. It is recommended that when engaging youth groups, the project should ensure they are committed and have time to spend on activities and projects. For example, engaging university students is not recommended as they are busy with studies and even part-time work. SFCG can explore the possibility of working with clubs that operate from schools (Interact clubs, link clubs, language clubs and other social service clubs) and are mandated to work for the welfare of society.

Representatives from women's groups were older and had more time for volunteer work of this nature. Older women had more time as their children were either in school or at work. They were used to cooking early and providing lunch to be taken to school or work. Youth on the other hand are busy either with school, university or work. Most attended extra classes, while university students (those that organized activities) were even busier with studies and part-time work, coupled with assignment and other work and social activities. Women were comparatively less busy since they were mostly older, with time on their hands for volunteer

work. They also liked to meet and connect with other women as this reduces isolation and provides them a peer network of support. Considering FGDs, it was easier to meet with women than with youth because the latter were comparatively busier with work, studies and other engagements.

When asked how they overcome challenges when organizing and implementing activities, many community groups and key informants at District level said they use religious leaders to endorse activities. In most Sri Lankan communities, people turn to religious leaders for advice and guidance. Using religious leader to take forward the message of reconciliation is non-threatening and sensitive to the needs of the community.

Some of the groups came across extreme views from some community members when attempting to gain their participation in activities. Comments such as “I don’t want to do anything that will help the Tamil community” and “if you want to do reconciliation, go and work in Jaffna” were aimed at some of the groups. Extremist elements from all ethnic groups are exacerbating the situation by spreading racial hatred and further polarizing communities. There is a dire need to engage those with extreme views to mitigate the harm they can cause. As an organization promoting reconciliation and peace-building SFCG can develop strategies to minimize the adverse effects caused by such groups.

The language barrier was another major challenge that prevented different community groups from communicating and developing relationships. Even though a national language policy gives equal place to both national languages and uses English as a connecting language, the education system is such that most people only speak one of the two national languages. Promoting more programs that encourage learning one another’s language would ensure that people from different ethnic groups can continue to communicate after they have established contact through activities such as those implemented by this project.

The education system in Sri Lanka is organized in such a way that students are segregated according to ethnicity. There are Sinhala schools, Tamil schools and Muslim schools for different ethnic groups. Even at school where studies are conducted in Sinhala and Tamil media, children of different groups have less opportunities to interact because they attend different classes based on their language preference. While the curriculum contains lessons on the customs, clothes, food and cultural events of different groups, and these lessons are imparted with a view to appreciating diversity; they are counterproductive and children from a young age are conditioned to view those from other ethnic groups as “different”. It is important to increase collaboration between ethnically segregated school children so that they are encouraged to interact and develop relationships with each. This would prevent them from coming out of the system thinking their counterparts from other ethnic groups are different creatures.

ONUR is in the process of disseminating tools developed by the project such as the facilitation guide. The tools will be distributed through Divisional secretariat offices in the Districts. SFCG should convince ONUR to implement facilitated discussions for their regional staff in all Districts. National integration officers are attached to each Divisional Secretariat Division office. These officers can be engaged by SFCG in future activities and facilitated discussions will be a good entry point to initiate this process. If SFCG engages with DS offices, the national integration officer could be a strong outreach mechanism to access communities at DS Division level (even for future projects and programs implemented by SFCG Sri Lanka).

Recommendations

- Conduct programs on-site at village level so that more people are encouraged to participate, and women who don’t want to leave their homes are engaged.

- When engaging youth groups, ensure they are able to commit the necessary time for organization and implementation of activities.
- Develop and implement customized programs for specific groups (i.e. women-only programs) so that participants are comfortable and in an environment that is conducive to participation.
- Explore the possibility of bringing together those with extremist views in a common forum so that dialogue takes place. This could lead to changes in perceptions, attitudes and preconceived notions.
- Promote more programs that encourage the learning of each other's languages.
- Increase collaboration between ethnically segregated schools and communities through more outreach activities.
- Facilitate further discussions between local government officials on the concepts related to reconciliation, and utilize national integration officers from ONUR as outreach officers for implementing activities at village level.

7.4. Observations by field research team

Field researchers in Anuradhapura, Mannar and Matara observed that implementing reconciliation and peacebuilding activities in communities with only one ethnic group was not very effective. This was especially true of Matara, where there were less Muslims and Tamils. Issues related to segregation were more caste-based rather than ethnic or religious based. On the other hand, researchers in multi-ethnic regions such as Kandy and Ampara observed that participants of activities appreciated the opportunity to meet and engage with those from other ethnic groups and religions. Therefore, when selecting communities for activities it is better to select areas where the different ethnic groups and religions are represented.

The research team also observed the need to identify more committed implementing partners and community based groups, be directly involved in the processes related to project implementation, ensure that activities monitored and followed up and liaise more closely with the local government authorities, community leaders and civil society representatives.

Recommendations

- When selecting locations for activities chose those with multi ethnic representation/ populations
- Ensure that activities are closely monitored and followed up.

7.5. Follow up and knowledge management

Many of the activities were one-off events. It would be better to monitor programs, get feedback from participants and design improved follow-up activities. Only a limited number of outreach activities could be implemented through the project due to limited resources (financial, technical and human). SFCG can consider an outreach program that will engage such groups in a continuous process. Groups implementing activities promoting reconciliation can do so as a process throughout a given time period. This would ensure interventions are responsive to community needs and address issues raised by the communities. In other words, SFCG can consider implementing a series of activities through a process of engagement rather than one-off activities.

Most participants of outreach activities appreciated the opportunity to participate in events, learn about other cultures, meet new friends from other ethnic groups and religions, and increase their community engagement through collaboration. In a context where extremism is promoted and polarization between communities creates conflict, such experiences create awareness and reduce the probability of future conflict as communities become more aware

of each other. Tools can be developed to disseminate the lessons from outreach activities. Lessons learned publications from awareness programs, video clips of community activities like *Shramadana*, voice bites from religious leaders and participants about their experiences with other ethnic and religious groups, photograph albums, social media posts (that can be shared), training modules from language classes and handbooks of other material developed (songs, drama scripts, forum theatre scripts etc.) are some examples.

Recommendations

- Develop and implement an outreach program that engages communities as a continuous process.
- Develop tools based on outreach activities and disseminate these for wider replication and dissemination of experiences.

8. Annexes

The following annexes are attached as separate files:

1. List of key informants met
2. Additional Results of the questionnaire survey
3. Case studies
4. Achievements of indicators against log frame
5. Summary of responses against criteria raised in the TOR
6. Questionnaires and guidelines used