



NEWSLETTER

December, 2022

Jesuit Refugee Service,
South Asia

Peace and Reconciliation Workshop - JRS Tamil Nadu

JRS understands reconciliation as "the (re)creation of right relationships" between forcibly displaced persons and host communities. Reconciliation includes a culture of peace, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence. Since April 2015, JRS staff in Tamil Nadu have attended several training programs in promoting reconciliation among the people served. Lately, between 21 and 23 November 2022, fifteen members of JRS Tamil Nadu attended a Peace & Reconciliation Workshop at Alverna Retreat House in Dindigul.



Through several simulation exercises, meditation, and presentations, the trainees, most of whom were themselves, victims of violence, were trained in creating Safe Spaces; understanding Reconciliation through JRS Framework; addressing Identity Conflicts; effecting Transformation of Conflicts; appreciating the Principles of Active Nonviolence; breaking the Cycles of Violence; valuing and practicing Empathy and Forgiveness; and, in Healing the Violence-triggered Trauma.

The trainer was Ms. Diana from the Reconciliation Unit of JRS International.

Mr. Anbu Selvaraj, one of the trainees, said: "The workshop has helped me be reconciled with my past, healed me of decades-long trauma, and enabled me to experience inner peace, to effect similar healing in and among my fellow refugees and to envision a hope-filled future for all."



Engendering Eligibility for the National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship (NMMS), JRS TN

The National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship (NMMS) is a central sector scheme. Under this scheme, one lakh fresh scholarships—to the tune of Rs 12,000 a year—are awarded to each of the selected students in class IX every year.

In view of making Sri Lankan Tamil children eligible for NMMS, special coaching has been launched in 21 Rehabilitation camps to the benefit of 347 students in Class VII, 187 of whom are girls. These children are being coached up so that they may successfully pass the NMMS tests—both the Mental Ability Test (MAT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)—that are scheduled for March 5, 2023.



Exploring Opportunities for Supporting Self-reliance of Sri Lankan Tamil through Inclusion: A collaborative Venture

On behalf of JRS, Mr. Mariadas and Mr. Antony Arulraj attended a half-day seminar on "Exploring Opportunities for Supporting Self-Reliance of Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu through Inclusion" at the King's Hotel, Chennai, on December 22, 2022. They made a presentation on "Building Confidence, Training Expectations, and Challenges."

They emphasized the JRS understanding of livelihoods as the capacities of forcibly displaced persons to sustain themselves, as well as the skills for the reconstruction of their social networks and integration into host communities.

Mr. Antony makes a presentation at the ADRA-hosted seminar in Chennai on December 22, 2022. The event was hosted by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in collaboration with the Department of Rehabilitation and UNHCR-Chennai.



The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of a sizable number of young Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, besides select officers from the UNHCR, the Department of Rehabilitation, ADRA, and OfERR.

Deaddiction Awareness Campaign

In December 2022, a massive de-addiction awareness campaign was organized by JRS in 85 Rehabilitation camps across 29 districts of Tamil Nadu. The frontline campaigners were the Sri Lankan Tamil children who attend JRS Complementary Education. Supported by JRS staff and encouraged by the Camp Advisory Committee and the Q-branch officers, these children took out rallies, performed role-plays, and did street theatre to generate awareness among the residents of the Rehabilitation camps.

The campaign was successful in that several chronic alcoholics have quit drinking. Mr. Thangaraj (41) is one of those cases of recovery.



He says, "I took to drinking at a very young age—5 years before my marriage." After begetting children, especially in my sober moments, I used to think of quitting drinking but continued drinking, giving lame excuses to my family. On December 16, at my children's insistent invitation, I attended an awareness campaign at our camp in Thenpallipattu, in Thiruvannamalai District. My own two children were among those who performed a role-play depicting how an entire family was reduced to a life of penury and indignity on account of the father's compulsive drinking. The campaign brought me to my senses, and instantly I chose to quit drinking. "In order that my resolution may firm up, I have undertaken a religious fast with a pledge to make a pilgrimage to Sabarimala and to seek the blessings of Lord Aiyappa."



Peace and Reconciliation Workshop for JRS South Asia

"A call to re-establish the right relationships—to work together to create a more humane and just world in which future generations can live happier and more fruitful lives." The foundation stone of the Jesuit Refugee Service is to show humanity and to help forcibly displaced persons.

The Peace and Reconciliation workshops were conducted by the JRS International Office Reconciliation Team—Ms. Danielle JRS International Peace and REC Director and Ms. Diana JRS International Peace and REC Officer—with the JRS Tamil Nadu office in Dindigul, the JRS Northeast office in Mizoram, and the JRS South Asia Regional Office in Delhi—from November 21st to December 4th, 2022. The final workshop took place at the Navjothi Renewal Center, St. Xavier School, which was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Soosai Mani, SJ Provincial, Delhi Jesuit.

Province. Rev. Fr. Soosai highlighted the need for peace and reconciliation initiatives in the world and how the hate speeches of political and religious leaders create division in societies. He mentioned Peace, security, and a future: basic needs that people amid violent conflict desperately want and seek. However, building back trust, livelihoods, institutions, and relationships is a complex and long-term endeavor, full of steps forward and back. This is the task of peacebuilding. And we can't afford, not to do it.

Please read the full article here. www.sas.jrs.net



Training of Trainers for Urban Refugee Project Teachers

13 JRS teachers serving the Chin and Afghan refugees in Delhi attended a training program in Peace and Reconciliation, at the Navjivan Renewal Centre, Delhi, from December 1-3, 2022. It was a training trainers' program, and the resource persons were Ms. Danielle Vella and Ms. Diana Rueda from the Reconciliation Unit of the JRS International Office.

The workshop helped teachers understand the significance of JRS's prioritized mission of promoting reconciliation—that is, re-establishing the right relationships between refugees and the host community.

The workshop provided the Chinese and Afghan teachers with a thorough understanding of what causes conflicts and how to resolve them nonviolently. At the end of the training, Mr. Morning Born, a Chin teacher, stated: "The workshop has given me the know-how as well as the skills to foster a culture of peace by nurturing those values, attitudes, and behaviors among the Chin refugees that restore human rights, reject violence and prevent conflicts." "I am sure that the JRS approach will effectively bring about social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between the refugee community and the host community."



Personality Development Session for Chin Youth, Delhi

JRS understands the importance of peacebuilding in a multicultural environment that hosts urban refugees. On December 15, 2022, brothers from Vidya Jyoti held a personality development session with Chin youth at the JRS Chin Centre, Delhi. The session was focused on building a positive attitude toward life. Br. Pankaj started off with the line, "At the end of the day, our outlook for tomorrow depends on one thing: attitude." A short video was played to make it more interesting and draw the attention of the youths. He also highlighted the types of attitudes: positive attitude, negative attitude, and neutral attitude. Factors that determine our attitude: benefits of a positive attitude, consequences of a negative attitude, why change is difficult, and steps to build up a positive attitude. The workshop will help them reconcile with themselves and reimagine the impression of world views formed in their minds as a result of prolonged exposure to the challenges of war and civil unrest. This, in turn, will help them understand the host community and the importance of cultivating positive relationships among peers both within and outside of their own community. A total of 21 youths from the Chin community participated in the session.

Awareness Session on Child Safeguarding for Radio Club Girls of Chin and Afghans, Delhi

The JRS commits to the protection from abuse, exploitation, and harassment of all JRS beneficiaries.

A session on child safeguarding was conducted by Sr. Rani Punnasseril (Kochurani) - an advocate at the Supreme Court, working for the migrants and refugees in her capacity as Secretary, of the Commission for Migrants, North Region, and JRS Child Safeguarding officer, conducted at the JRS Tilak Nagar Centre for the Radio Girls Club of Chin and Afghans together.

The girls were briefed on how to safeguard themselves in any given situation, within or outside of JRS setups. A small educational video was played to provide more background to the girls on safeguarding, the JRS PSEAH focal point at the JRS office, and the multiple feedback and reporting mechanisms elaborated in the PSEAH policy that meets the needs and preferences of the

people served. The JRS Safeguarding Officer briefed the girls in cases of emergency where a child appeared to be at immediate and serious risk and whom they could contact directly; the numbers and organizations working for child safeguarding were shared with them. The significance of both good and bad touch was also emphasized.

The Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, along with the code of ethics, is the foundation for safe programming standards, which reflect JRS's commitment to first adopt safeguarding practices within our organization to ensure our employees, student volunteers, vendors, and other representatives do not deliberately or unintentionally harm children or adults in affected communities.

A total of 23 JRS Center students from the Chin and Afghan communities attended the session.



Peace Sessions for Chin and Afghans Children, Delhi



Teachers at JRS Chin and Afghan Centres in Delhi Conducted the Peace sessions with their respective students (Complementary and Computer students) after they received their first formal Training of Teachers on Peace and Reconciliation at NRC for three days facilitated by the JRS International office. A total of 91 students attended the Peace sessions conducted by the respective teachers.



JRS Northeast India, Accompanying the Burmese PoC

Implementing a new project could be a daunting task. But we did it! Are you interested in learning how JRS Northeast gets started? Let us look at JRS Northeast's attempt to kick-start the project. JRS Northeast is currently based in two northeastern states, namely Manipur and Mizoram. The government and the communities of both states act differently when it comes to responding to people entering the states from Myanmar, as asylum seekers. While the government of Mizoram and the community are receptive to the PoCs, the government of Manipur and its community are comparatively less receptive to the PoCs.

Despite the difference in attitude towards PoCs from the respective states, our team followed a standard approach in conducting a baseline and needs assessment survey, a necessary process to get the project started. The approaches include:



Home visits of host community:

A community outreach initiative was undertaken by the JRS Northeast team by randomly selecting households from villages where the number of PoCs is highly concentrated. Orientation about the JRS and PoCs to the host community during the home visit has resulted in imparting awareness and sensitization amongst the host community about the presence of PoCs.

A handful of the villagers in the area commented "I wasn't aware of the refugees until now." At the same time, some are fully conscious of the situation of those PoCs in hiding and the restrictions imposed by the state agency. As one of the respondents in one of the areas narrates, "There can be a better relationship between the host community and the refugees when there is the interaction between the two parties. The interaction will be possible when the refugees can mingle freely with the host community, which is possible only when the government revokes its restriction laws. Otherwise, we (the host community) also fear for our safety. Likewise, we can interact more freely if the PoCs are allowed to exercise their full freedom and live without fear; only then can the two parties live in harmony."

The initiative hopes to create a safe and peaceful environment for the PoCs through sensitization, wherein both PoCs and the host community co-exist peacefully and live in harmony.



Burmese Camps

JRS NE Home / Camp visit of PoCs:



Home visits were arranged for those PoCs residing in rented apartments/houses, and camp visits for those residing in camps. JRS Northeast team was able to build a rapport and develop a deeper bond with the PoCs through these visits. The PoCs did not only share the difficulties and challenges they face which mostly include meeting their basic needs - food, shelter, health, employment, and education, but also their personal stories and struggles which are not included in the survey questionnaire. They convey their gratefulness towards JRS for its relentless effort in reaching out to them and its keen interest in learning the PoCs' needs. The stories they have shared and the needs they have expressed during the visits have guided the organization in framing critical areas of intervention and attaining maximum benefit for the PoCs.

Meeting with POC leaders and host community leaders

A group of PoC leaders and host community leaders met and were given an orientation about the JRS work and JRS project in northeast India. The meeting was organized for various reasons: to gain trust from the leaders; to be able to gain comfortable access to both communities as and when needed; to establish a cordial relationship between the two parties and also with our team; and to avoid any potential conflict that could arise due to a lack of information and communication. The meeting helped our team secure the assurance of any kind of assistance, with regard to POCs, that we need from them.

The baseline and need assessment survey, which was instrumental in identifying key areas for intervention, also helped in developing beneficiary eligibility criteria for intended interventions. Most of the problems they face are still not addressed. Since their needs are diverse and heavily inclined towards meeting their basic needs, addressing them will require an extended engagement with the PoCs, with a concerted effort from different stakeholders: the host community, PoCs and community leaders, state agencies, community-based organizations, NGOs, and knowledgeable individuals who have a keen interest in providing for the needs of the PoCs.



Special Care through Case Management for Rohingya Children, Bangladesh

JRS-Bangladesh helped the most vulnerable children who were concerned about various types of protection through the case management process. For this case management process, JRS-BD engaged the aid of six caseworkers and eight case volunteers. They collaborate and communicate with young child families, neighbors, and other community members to continue to identify hazards to children so that we may intervene and lower the risk.

Currently, a total of 43 children with disabilities out of 118 (44 females and 74 males) have been treated by JRS-BD during the course of the past two months.

JRS-BD provided a variety of services, including house visits, PSS, awareness sessions, updating clients on their position through follow-up, ECD, and adolescent sessions, referring medical and relevant agencies, and feeding children with disabilities nutritious food.

There are also more than 110 cases of older children who require extensive protective measures, and JRS is working with them for a brighter future.

Md. Faysal, a Rohingya child of Camp 4, says, "I am 10 years old, and due to poverty; I went out of the camp to Cox's Bazar to work in a tea shop. CB-JRS MCAC contacted me and helped me realize that I had made a wrong choice and had put myself in great danger. I returned to the camp safely and was reunited with my family. "I am happy and content with my life now and thankful to CB-JRS for giving my sister the opportunity to serve as a volunteer at the CB-JRS MCAC center."

JRS-BD interventions through case management services have helped most of the youngsters who faced numerous hazards and were emotionally and physically drained. They are now smiling and enjoying time at MCAC (Multipurpose Child and Adolescent Centre) with their parents, and their parents are more informed than before.

According to JRS Bangladesh data and observations, the camp's environment has changed over time. Therefore, children face a variety of risks. According to information now available, some children gamble; some work as young children to support their families; the drains inside the camps are filthy and dangerous for children; and some children have skin issues





Jesuit Refugee Service, South Asia

Nonprofit organization

We accompany, serve, and advocate the cause of refugees and other forcibly displaced people, so that they may heal, learn and determine their own future.

For more information:



www.sas.jrs.net



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Delivering Significant Change

62,189 people were served in 2021

JRS South Asia was present in 2 countries

- Accompany
- Serve
- Advocate