



NEWSLETTER



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF CARITAS SRI LANKA

CARITAS SRI LANKA – SEDEC HOSTS CARITAS ASIA WORKSHOP ON PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION ON SAFE MIGRATION & ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Caritas Asia Regional Workshop on Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation on Safe Migration & Anti-human Trafficking got underway in Colombo on January 29, 2018 at the Renuka City Hotel.

The 3-day workshop which brought together nearly 30 participants from 16 Caritas National Member Organizations and representatives from Global Good Shepherds, Good Shepherds International, is hosted by Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC on behalf of Caritas Asia Regional Office, based in Bangkok Thailand.



The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Cristina Rigman, a renowned professional international Trainer from Romania.

Extending a welcome to the participants, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director, Caritas Sri Lanka said that hosting such an international event is made possible due to the prevailing peaceful situation in the country following nearly three decades of violence & conflict.

A video message from His Grace Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi, Archbishop of Tokyo and President of Caritas Japan and Caritas Asia who was unable to attend the workshop in person, called on all participants to take advantage of their time together in Colombo.

Mr. Zar Gomez, Caritas' Asia Regional Coordinator thanked Caritas Sri Lanka for accepting to host the event and explained the objectives of this important workshop as part of the Caritas Asia Regional Strategic Plan.

"IT IS A CRIME IF YOU DON'T VOTE" SAYS EC CHAIRMAN MAHINDA DESHAPRIYA

Caritas Colombo – Seth Sarana with the assistance of Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC organized an election awareness programme on the new system of local government elections on 22nd January 2017 at the Joesph Vaz Centre in Borella. A large number of community members, CBO leaders, priests, religious, staff of Seth Sarana and SEDEC staff participated in the awareness programme.



Election Commission Chairman Mr. Mahinda Deshapriya who has built a tremendous reputation as an independent government official and a person behind the propagation of good governance practices, chaired the main speech.

Reminiscing his past involvement with Christian and Catholic priests and Bishops in spearheading to strengthen democratic activities, he said Catholic Church is not a new place for him. He said that it was only a Pope who has said that it is a crime if we do not vote reminding everyone the gravity of voting.



Sharing his thoughts, Deshapriya said that by our birth we get two things that we cannot say 'NO' to. One is death and the other is the franchise which every adult is entitled for. He asked the audience to take the election seriously,

Cont. to pg. 4



Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC

GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR

November 2017 - December 2018

CARITAS SRI LANKA-SEDEC, 133, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8.

Tel: + 94 11 2691885, 2693989, 2662474. Fax: + 94 11 2695136.

E-mail: sedec@slt.lk, sedec@caritaslk.org. Web: www.caritaslk.org

Jan.- Mar. 2018

Vol - 25 No - 29

We welcome our new Diocesan Directors,
Rev. Fr. Bennette Mellawa, Rev. Fr. Alex Robert & Rev. Fr. Herman Fernando who
recently assumed as Directors of
**Caritas Anuradhapura - Sethsaviya, Caritas Batticaloa - EHED
& Caritas Galle - SED** respectively.

AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON THE NEW ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN CARITAS KURUNEGALA



Under the series of programmes covering all the 13 Dioceses, Caritas Kurunegala - Janasetha Centre organized an awareness programme on the new electoral system on 25th January 2018 at the Janasetha Centre. A large number of CBO members from the Diocese of Anuradhapura, Kandy, Chilaw, and Kurunegala participated in the half-day session. This is the third of several awareness programme on the new electoral system, organized by SEDEC with the Caritas Diocesan Centres.

Mr. Nimal Punchihewa, Director – Legal Affairs, Election Commissioner's Office, Prof. Ratnajeewan Hool, Member of Election Commission & Manaz Makim, National Organizer, CaFFE were the resource persons who enlightened the audience on the new election system, which will be in effect at the upcoming local government elections across the island.

Prof. Hool gave many examples as to how some competing parties and individuals were going against the accepted norms and regulations of the new election system using hate speech on different platforms like social media, religious places and through poster campaigns.

The programme was held under the leadership and guidance of Rev. Fr. Jamika Perera, Director, Caritas Kurunegala – Janasetha.

SEMINAR ON "NEW SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND MONITORING PLANS"



A seminar organized by Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC was held on the above subject, in view of the forthcoming Local Government elections on 15th January 2018. Mr. Rohana Hettiarachchi, the Executive Director of Peoples Action for Free and Fair Election (PAFFREL), which was formed in 1987 primarily to observe elections, presided. Civil society members, Priests, Religious and staff of SEDEC and Seth Sarana participated in the event.

Mr. Hettiarachchi explained how the new system for the Local Government Elections would take place and briefed on the methodology of calculating the number of councilors for each electorate. As the total number of councilors elected would be double in size numbering 8,356 from 4,486, he emphasized on the importance of having a mechanism to monitor the services they are going to deliver during the 4 year period, when they would be in office.

Unlike the earlier electoral system, the focus at this Local Government Election is more on the committed individuals who are keen and responsible for the development of their village or town. This has laid the foundation for a healthier political environment and culture.

Referring to SEDEC, he said, organizations of this nature could do a lot by creating awareness and informing the public as to how they should select their representatives to the Local Governments.

SETH SARANA MOVES TO A NEW HOME AT ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE

Caritas Colombo - Seth Sarana, the Social Arm of the Colombo Diocese moved to a new place in Borella on 15th January 2018. Prior to this move, the Diocesan Organization was at the Paul the VI Centre in Pettah.

A large number of priests, special invitees and staff of Seth Sarana and SEDEC participated in the opening Ceremony. The office space was declared open by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and Auxiliary Bishop Maxwell Silva. The new place is on the second floor of the Jubilee building of the Archbishop's House. The event was organized under the guidance and leadership of Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayaka.



TALLY TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR DC PROGRAMME & FINANCE OFFICERS

Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC organized a Tally Training workshop recently with the objective of enhancing the knowledge of Tally Software for programme & finance officers. The Tally software is used by the Caritas Sri Lanka network across all the 13 Diocesan Centres mainly for the accounting and financial solutions.

30 participants from 5 Diocesan Centres namely Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Mannar, Vanni and Jaffna attended the full-day workshop held at Caritas Vanni – HUDEC on the 16th of March 2018. The respective Diocesan Directors were also present for the workshop.



The resource persons, Mr. Uditha Wijesinghe and Mr. Nithya Krishan from NextGen Soft Tech (PVT) Ltd conducted the training in the Tamil medium. Three National Centre Staff also engaged in facilitating sessions during the workshop.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY HOLY MASS

Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC celebrated the 104th International Migrants Day with a Holy Mass on 15th of January 2018 under the theme, “Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees”.

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director, Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC who celebrated this special Holy Mass, at his homily mentioned that the word and the theme ‘Migration’ is not alien to Christians or Catholics. In the Holy Bible, there are many references being made to instances of migration. He said, even the arrival of Jesus to the mankind was journey and could be called as ‘migration’ especially, in the sense of what Jesus had to undergo as a human being after sacrificing His own life. This is the same tragedy and wretchedness that the migrants go through today, he said.

In reference to the activities organized by Holy Father at Vatican, Fr. Mahendra said, that the present Holy Father has taken an enormous interest in the affairs of the migrants and refugees around the world. In fact he has shown his empathy and given a beautiful example by helping a few migrant families, which he wants everyone else to consider seriously when addressing the migrant and refugee crisis. The Holy Mass was organized by the Safe Migration Unit of Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC.



CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR DIOCESAN SAFE MIGRATION PROGRAMME OFFICERS

The Migration Unit of Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC organized a capacity building programme for the Safe Migration Programme Officers on 16th and 17th January 2018 at the SEDEC premises. Safe Migration Project officers representing all 13 Diocesan Centres participated in the two-day workshop held in Tamil and Sinhala mediums. This was held under the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) funded project on safe migration.

The resource team included Mr. Yasapala Silva, Consultant, Mr. M.T. Mubaris- Trainer from Center for Mediation, Mrs. Shyamalie Ranaraja, Attorney-at-Law, Supreme Court and Dr. Nimalka Fernando, International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR).



CARITAS SRI LANKA LENTEN PROGRAMME IN COLLABORATION WITH CARITAS COLOMBO - SETH SARANA



MOTIVATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR AQUINAS STAFF

Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC conducted a motivational programme for the staff of the Aquinas College of Higher Studies last week, on 5th January 2017 at the SEDEC Auditorium, in Colombo. A group of 74 lecturers took part in a half a day session which saw fruitful discussion and interactions. The team of well experienced senior staff from the SEDEC resource pool conducted the programme. The workshop comprised of three sessions.

The first one conducted by Mr. Sajith Silva dealt with the aspects pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of an educationist especially in the context of strong student-teacher engagement. He referred to modern technologies such as neuro-marketing and various researches conducted that helped educators to identify about available tools.



The second session, conducted by Mr. Freddie Jayawardana, titled 'What is Time' dealt with the meaning of time and how time is associated with our day-to-day living. The third session covered the stories of inspirational personalities who have evolved from challenging environments and currently working with the grass root level societies voicing for the rights of the people. Mr. K.Theivanrarajaha, a seasoned expert in the Disaster Risk Management with 35 years of experience shared his personal experiences and demonstrated the nature of adaptability and perseverance that some humans have mastered while transforming their tragedies to inspirational models in the society.

The workshop was conducted under the guidance and leadership of Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC.

"It is a crime, if you don't vote" says EC Chairman Mahinda Deshapriya... Cont. from pg. 1

reminding the audience that elections define everything around in our lives whether we like it or not.

Therefore he says that we need to make use of the new system to select trustworthy, honest and dedicated counselors to every electorate irrespective of the party & political biasness that Sri Lankans have absorbed through the previous political reforms.

Mr. Nimal Punchihewa, Legal Director to the Election Commission and Mr. Saman Sri Rathnayake, Additional Commissioner were the other resource persons who spoke to the audience about the new election system and demonstrated how under the new system the number of counselors would be elected for each electorate stating that the new system has 100% proportional representation.

The seminar was organized under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Lawrence Ramanayaka, Director, Caritas Colombo – Seth Sarana.