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133, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka

Tel: + 94 11 2691885

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

Our Christmas Message

Christmas is a season of great joy: a time for remembering the past and hoping for the future. May the glorious message of peace and love fill you with joy during this wonderful season. This Christmas as you count your blessings sent to you by the Almighty, don't forget to pray for those you aren't able to partake in this wonderful celebration. We wish you, may the true meaning of Christmas fill you with joy.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Fr. National Director and Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC family



MULTI STAKEHOLDER CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME ON LABOUR MIGRANT CASE HANDLING MECHANISM IN AMPARA

Caritas Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Employment organized a capacity enhancement programme for stakeholders engaged in the safe labour migration related work in Ampara district recently. This is the first such programme conducted under this series and more such programmes are to be held in the districts of Nuwara Eliya, Colombo, Gampaha, Batticaloa, Vanni, Jaffna and Kurunegala in the coming months.

The objective of these workshops is to build the capacities of the participants in spheres related to the case handling procedures, especially deploying an empathetic approach to their profession while dealing with the people whom they serve.



During the first workshop in Ampara, a group of 43 participants including Migration Development Officers in the district of Ampara, leaders of the migration societies formed by SWOAD-Social Welfare Organization Ampara District, a deep impact partner under the project funded by Swiss Agency For Development Corporation (SDC) attended the 2-day residential programme held at the Monty Hotel in Ampara on 28th and 29th of November 2019. The programme was conducted in the Tamil medium.

During the first day, the participants had the opportunity to engage in interactive sessions, especially in understanding the type of cases they receive and how they engage as officers in dealing with such

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WORKSHOP ON DEEP JOURNEY INTO LAUDATO SI

Caritas Asia with the support of the Global Catholic Climate Committee, Philippines conducted a workshop on the above mentioned theme from 13th to 15th November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The purpose of this symposium is to empower people to "raise awareness on the urgency to respond to the call of Laudato Si to care for our common home".

The workshop draws inspiration from Pope Francis's Encyclical "Laudato Si" which is a treatise on the environment and the spiritual, economic & social and political aspects that impact on it. This is done by seeking an ecological conversion of individuals in order to simply lifestyles and empowers such individuals to raise their voices for bold policy changes to effect external transformation.



Pope Francis emphasizes that God created man and the Universe and it is our bounden duty to safeguard the earth not only for ourselves but for the children who will come after us. Representatives from 13 member organization in Asia participated at this workshop.

K. Vareeswaran, Programme Consultant, participated on behalf of Caritas Sri Lanka.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF COUNCILORS ON EMOTIONAL LITERACY SCHOOL PROGRAM

Emotional literacy helps people especially youth/students to manage their own emotions effectively, appropriately and productively, while also developing positive social interactions with other people in the society.

Therefore, this programme is being implemented to increase the emotional literacy, well-being and resilience among the school students in order to prevent self-harm and suicidal behaviors. Through this programme school teachers will also be capacitated to understand their role and to identify the signs of the distress in children.



As part of the programme implementation, we have had series of interviews for the selection of the counselors and subsequently identified suitable counselors by Dr. Venura Palihawadana, Consultant Psychiatric for project implementing dioceses. Presently, we have conducted an orientation/training session on 8th of October 2019 for the counselors to increase awareness on the project, its implementation strategy and specifically the role of the counsellor in this project. The orientation session was conducted by Mr. Beppe Pedron, Country Representative of Caritas Italiana and Dr. Venura Palihawadana.

WORLD FOOD DAY 2019

Caritas Sri Lanka network commemorated the World Food Day 2019 on 16th October 2019 at Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC. This year WFD is being observed under the theme “Our Actions Are Our Future Healthy Diets for A# Zero Hunger World.” The opening ceremony commenced with the Holy Eucharistic celebrated by Rev. Fr. Desmond Perera, Diocesan Director, Caritas Kandy.

The National Director, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, explained in detail about the message of Pope Francis to end Hunger by 2025 during his Sermon, also giving a clear picture to the audience on the vital importance of thinking about the poor who go hungry everyday while we waste food. 75 participants including Diocesan Directors, Diocesan Coordinators, Field officers, Monitoring and Evaluation officers and Finance officers participated in this event.

Caritas Sri Lanka network is implementing the program “Addressing causes for poverty and Ensuring Food Security for farming Communities” in Sri Lanka under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director, Caritas Sri Lanka –SEDEC from year 2018 with the support of Caritas Norway/NORAD. Achievements of the Food Security program were highlighted through a Documentary film.



Dr. Deepthi D. Priyantha, Community Health Medical Officer, Galgamuwa, Department of Indigenous Medicine delivered the presentation on Healthy Diets. Dr. K. T. Sundaresan, Honorary Consultant Physician/ Teaching Hospital, Batticaloa, Senior Lecturer in Medicine, Department of Clinical Sciences, Eastern University, UN Physician- Eastern Province gave a presentation on Food as a Medicine. The ceremony concluded with the vote of thanks by Mr. K. Theivendirarajah, Senior Program Manager, Caritas Sri Lanka –SEDEC.

Caritas Sri Lanka wishes to thank Caritas Norway for the guidance and support given to promote sustainable agriculture, to reduce malnutrition and poverty in rural areas of Sri Lanka.

TRAINING PROGRAMME ON 'YOUTH FOR ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA'

A five day Training Programme was held at Caritas Centre in Chilaw under the 'Expansion of Religious Amity Programme 2019 – Enhanced Youth Participation' from 28th October to 01st November, 2019. The theme of the training programme was 'Youth for Ethnic and Religious Harmony through Social Media' where 58 enthusiastic youth from Chilaw, Colombo and Kurunegala dioceses participated. The conduct and the enthusiasm showed by the youth exceeded the expectations as the programme concluded in a highly successful manner. First two days were devoted for youth leadership, value of teamwork, gender stereotypes and values in diversity, awareness about discrimination, respect for cultural behaviour, understanding peace, conflict and violence, hate speech and responses and understanding the global issues. Activities performed in between training sessions kept the youth absorbed and bonded to the proceedings.

Following three days were dedicated for photography and social media. Introduction to photography and video including practical exercises, ethics on photography, video editing, handling Facebook and WhatsApp, setting up logos and developing stickers, uploading images and videos, creating blogs and YouTube channel, were explained by the respective professionals who served as resource personnel. Participants were asked to create their own blog and YouTube, where some of the participants succeeded in their task. Outdoor activities such as video reporting of a melee between two factions in a village and visiting a Buddhist temple, Hindu temple and Mosque were the outstanding creative work of the youth where mock shooting and reporting were performed by themselves. On the last night of the programme, a cultural evening was held in front of a bonfire where the participants showcased their talents in singing, dancing and acting.

The highly successful training session ended with awarding of certificates by The Bishop of Chilaw, Rt. Rev. Valence Mendis and presenting a dual-purpose pen drive to every participant. The five day programme was organized by the SJ&SP unit of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC in association with the efficient staff of Caritas Chilaw lead by the Director, Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson.

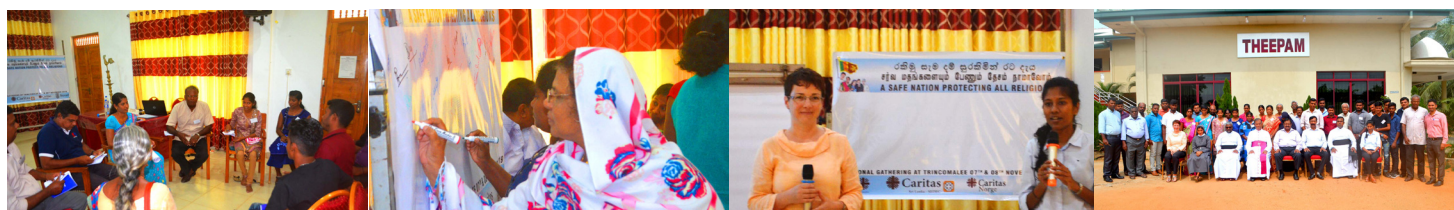


This programme was funded by Caritas Norway/NORAD. Six more Technical Training programmes of this kind will be organized with the participation of other Caritas dioceses in November and December 2019.

REGIONAL GATHERING OF INTER RELIGIOUS FORUM (IRF) MEMBERS

The Regional Gathering IRF Members of the North-East region was held on the 7th & 8th November 2019 at the Theepam Centre in Trincomalee. 40 members of the Caritas Interreligious groups from the Dioceses of Batticaloa, Jaffna, Mannar and Trincomalee were the participants in this event.

This one and a half day programme focused on creating a platform for the participants to learn on the concepts of Conflict Analysis and Non Violent Conflict resolution. Ms. Bozana Ivelic' - Katava of Agiamondo was the main resource person for this session. Based on the learning the participants were grouped according to their Dioceses to discuss and identify conflicts in their localities and to find solutions for the same as interreligious groups.



INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP ON FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM FOR SEMINARIANS

With the objective of enhancing the awareness on Social and Economic development activities of Catholic Church and special emphasis given to sustainable Agriculture to ensure food security. The Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC has organized an introductory workshop for the seminarians of "Daham Sewana" Intermediate Seminary from Kaluthara.

This introductory workshop was held on 04th December 2019 at the Caritas National Centre Auditorium, Colombo 08. There were 29 young seminarians present. They were accompanied by the Rev. Fr. Cicil Joy the Rector of the seminary from Kaluthara.

Introduction was led by Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, National Director who focused on "Laudato Si" and the food security program in brief.



The Senior Executive Manager, Dr. Shemal Fernando PhD, addressed the gathering to share a descriptive presentation on objectives, vision, mission and program strategic priorities in Caritas Sri Lanka network. Project Introduction was done by Mrs. Nilani Tissera, National Coordinator for the food security program. Her presentation included;

- Poverty of Sri Lanka
- Malnutrition
- Climate change
- Documentary film on achievements of "Addressing causes for poverty and ensuring Food Security of farming communities" in Sri Lanka implemented in 13 Diocesan Centres with the support of Caritas Norway/NORAD.

In the workshop the participants were also able to uplift their knowledge on the following aspects;

- Organic Farming and home garden establishment,
- Integrated farming-crop, livestock and fish farming,
- Introduction to pest repellents.

Mr. Isuru Wickramasinghe and Mr. R. Nishanth, Regional Coordinators and Mrs. Sithumini Perera, Program Officer of National Centre shared their views of the above mentioned subjects.

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migrant cases. A psychosocial approach was infused into the sessions by the resource person to make them aware of the other side of the migrant's story to improve the quality of their services while understanding the emotions in a better way and the agony that the vulnerable migrants and their family members go through.

Mr. G. Gnanapragasam Suresh, Technical Advisor – Education and Lifeskills was the resource person who conducted the sessions. He used adult-learning methodologies based on 10:20:70 model for development and learning and 4A's learning models during the workshop.

On the second day of the programme, Mr. M. K. Pathamanaathan, Director General Human Resources & Mission Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed the participants on the procedures related to the death cases of the vulnerable migrant workers who are not registered or when deaths occur at a time when their registration with SLBFE has expired. The migration officers who deal with such situations and cases daily had numerous queries to ask from the ministry officials.

Mr. Anura Kumara, Manager, Welfare Division, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment spoke on the procedures related to the insurance, death compensation and procedural document requirements when applying for migrants' case related matters at SLBFE.

Migration team of Caritas National Centre spearheaded organizing and arranging the logistics in close collaboration with SWOAD in Ampara. This project intervention was carried out under the SDC funded Safe Labour Migration Project.