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© Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC, 2018  
First Edition 1999  
Second Edition 2008  
Thrid Edition 2018

ISBN 978-955-3460-00-4

Published by : Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC, Sri Lanka

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# **Journeying together for a Peaceful Society**

History of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC from 1968 to 2018





‘GOD’S LOVE FOR ALL’

"Realization of a Just Sri Lankan Society  
based on the Gospel Values of Love,  
Forgiveness, Peace, Unity and Equality-lived,  
promoted and protected irrespective of Caste,  
Creed and Nationality."

## Vision

## Mission

"Empowering people through animation  
and being in solidarity with their efforts for  
Integral Human Development"

**GOLDEN JUBILEE** of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018



## CARITAS SRI LANKA-SEDEC JUBILEE SONG

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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## Foreword



*The mandate to set up a Social and Economic Centre which would free the marginalized and enable them to obtain their inherent rights was the brainchild of the late His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray, who gave the task to Fr. Joe Fernando in 1956. The choice of Fr. Joe to set in motion the mandate of the Bishops was in no small measure*

*due to the experience and dynamism shown by Fr. Joe as early as the late 1940's when he ventured out as a young priest to influence the fishermen to seek integral development. In a very simple manner Fr. Joe started a Co-operative Fishermen's Association at Sea Street.*

*During almost 50 years of yeomen service to the nation, Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC has grown to become one of the largest and most respected humanitarian organizations in Sri Lanka. Its work centred around Integral Human Development which is grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, is carried out in partnership with the thirteen (13) Caritas Diocesan Centres that implement many projects in twelve (12) Catholic Dioceses and includes a wide spectrum ranging from peace building, inter-religious harmony and development activities to addressing humanitarian needs including relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in times conflict and natural disasters.*

*This document records all these achievements in a nutshell and will certainly be a rich source of information for all those interested in the role played by the Church in times of crisis as well as in promoting Integral Human Development. The messages of goodwill that we have received*

*from his Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith and other dignitaries which grace this publication will inspire us to continue our journey in the service of humanity.*

*This journey spanning half a century could not have been accomplished by Caritas Sri Lanka by itself. There are many institutional bodies and individuals who have been behind its growth and development. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka and the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development for their guidance and support that has enabled Caritas Sri Lanka to become a social force in the country.*

*I also acknowledge the services rendered by all our past National Directors, both past and present Diocesan Centre Directors as well as the past and present Caritas staffs belonging to the Dioceses and the National Centre that has contributed immensely to building up the Caritas Sri Lanka network on a firm foundation. Consolidating this firm foundation has been the support and accompaniment of our many partners and donors who have given us the confidence to steer through many challenges.*

*Underlying all these efforts have been our humble services to those communities at the grassroots. They have given us an opportunity to serve them and made us realize the enriching potential of participatory development. Their courage and endurance has been a source of strength to us.*

*Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC with 50 years of service behind it looks forward to continuing its services to humanity with the blessings of God almighty.*

Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke

National Director, Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC

November 2018

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Acronyms**

CBCSL	- Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka
CBO	- Community Based Organization
CFD	- Centre for Disabled
CSL	- Caritas Sri Lanka
CSO	- Civil Society Organization
DC	- Diocesan Centres
DRM	- Disaster Risk Management
DS	- Divisional Secretariate
EHED	- Eastern Human & Economic Development Centre
GGH	- Green Gold Harvesters
GN	- Grama Niladhari
HUDEC	- Human Development Centre
IDPs	- Internally Displaced Persons
IHD	- Integral Human Development
IRF	- Inter Religious Forum
JVP	- Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LLRC	- Lesson Learned & Reconciliation Commission
LTTE	- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam
SED Galle	- Social and Economic Development Centre of the Diocese of Galle
SEDEC	- Social, Economic Development Centre
SETIK	- Socio Economic Training Institute Kandy
SHG	- Self Help Group
SLBFE	- Sri Lanka Bureau for Foreign Employment
TRC	- Truth and Reconciliation Commission
USCOD	- Uva Socio-Economic & Community Development Centre
VPC	- Village Peace Council
WRDS	- Women Rural Development Society

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





## **Message from His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith** Archbishop of Colombo



*I am happy indeed to convey my greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the golden jubilee celebration of the Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC (Social and Economic Development Centre) which was founded by one of our priests of the Archdiocese of Colombo, the late Rev. Fr. Joe Fernando.*

*The small-scale Cooperative Society, Fr. Fernando envisaged fifty years ago, with a view to helping the poor fisher-folk in the coastal villages of Negombo, and more specifically, at Sea Street, Negombo where he served as parish priest, has grown gradually overtime into a full-fledged national institution that covers a wide range of organized activities in the interest of the development of our people.*

*Under the direction and guidance of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL), SEDEC as the social arm of the Church, has contributed phenomenally facilitating relief, rehabilitation, re-settlement, livelihood support, training and many other aspects akin to integral human development. During the past five decades, the Caritas Sri Lanka's network of Diocesan Centers covering all the nine provinces of the Island has catered significantly to the cause of national reconciliation and nation-building. It is heartening to see that SEDEC is determined to extend still its services to many others such as those affected by the phenomenon of migration and those ill-treated and exploited labourers who cry out for justice and fair-play.*

*I make use of this opportunity to recall with deep gratitude the late Thomas Cardinal Cooray who encouraged very much Fr. Joe Fernando in his vision and furnished him with the wherewithal to go ahead with the project. All the successive Directors, including the incumbent Director Fr. Mahendra Gunetilleke, have worked zealously to improve the quality of service and the effectivity of this all important ministry. I thank them and the staff for the job well done and wish God's choicest blessings on them all.*

*Ad Multos Annos!*



## **Message from His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vianney Fernando** Chairman of the Catholic National Commission for Justice Peace & Human Development



*It is with great joy and profound sentiments of gratitude to God Almighty that I send this message marking the Golden Jubilee of Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC.*

*I had the privilege of taking over the responsibility of SEDEC from the pioneer-Director, the late Rev. Fr. Joe Fernando. I have, therefore, followed the journey of Caritas Sri Lanka from the beginning of its establishment by the late Cardinal Thomas Cooray OMI, the Servant of God, until now.*

*With the emergence of the post Vatican II reforms and new structures in line with the Conciliar teachings, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka established SEDEC as the National Center for the social apostolate. Throughout its history of fifty years under different Episcopal Chairmen, the National Directors with the cooperation of a dedicated staff and their commitment to Human Development, Social Justice and Promotion of Peace and Human Rights, numerous programmes have been carried out in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel and the Church's Social Doctrine.*

*We have much to be grateful to all our partner-*

*agencies in different parts of the world for their support and generosity for the past fifty years in our service to the poor and the marginalized. The empowerment of communities in Sri Lanka, irrespective of religion, race and language, has been our strength over the years.*

*The Diocesan centers in all the areas, near and far, have been sharing our common mission and committed themselves to the vision of Caritas Sri Lanka. This inter-Diocesan solidarity enabled SEDEC to respond to natural and man-made disasters with immediate attention and sustained interest for the well-being of the affected people.*

*We thank God for the present National Director and the dedicated staff of SEDEC as well as all the Diocesan Directors and their staff for enthusiastically carrying out the ongoing programs in all our Dioceses. Creativity and sustainability have been the hall-marks of the service of Caritas Sri Lanka to our marginalized people and thereby to the whole nation.*

*We wish to record our appreciation and gratitude to all our devoted members of the National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development as well as the members of*

*our Advisory Board and Finance Committee for the contribution, of their time and skills which enables us to serve the Church and the Nation with a sense of competence and professionalism. While we thank God for the numerous blessings we have received over the past fifty years, Caritas Sri Lanka takes this grace-filled moment to commit itself to continue our service to the Nation with even greater vigour and commitment in the years ahead.*

*As the current Chairman of Caritas Sri Lanka, I wish to reiterate our humble thanks to God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit for the continued graces given to us over the past five decades.*

*May the occasion of the Golden Jubilee help the Church in Sri Lanka to forge-ahead itself even more profoundly to carry out our mission to ensure fullness of human life to all the people of our beloved Nation.*



## **Message from His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Gnanapragasam** Vice Chairman of the Catholic National Commission for Justice Peace & Human Development



*I am indeed very pleased to send my warm congratulations and appreciation to Caritas SEDEC on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of its dedicated service to the country. My special prayers and sincere thanks to all those who had a long-term vision to establish the Social and Economic Development centre (SEDEC), the social arm of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka.*

*Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC, under its umbrella, has its branches in all 12 dioceses of the country. In my diocese we have Caritas Vanni serving in the Vanni areas, namely in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, and the other in Jaffna, namely Caritas Hudec. These two institutions have helped the people immensely particularly during the civil war and displacements and also after Tsunami disaster.*

*Irrespective of race, religion or caste, these institutions, with the assistance of National Centre, SEDEC, were able to alleviate the sufferings of the people. They were also able to build houses for the homeless. Now they are looking after families where the breadwinners are women and the widows-the victims of war. Their services extend to the work of rehabilitation of war combatants and also looking into the education of poor and needy children.*

*I take this opportunity to thank all those past Directors of SEDEC and congratulate Revd. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke for his tireless efforts to support the affected people. I thank him specially for supporting the two branches of ours in Jaffna.*

*May God continue to bless the Director of SEDEC and all those who are working with him at the National Centre.*





**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Message from His Lordship Bishop Isao Kikuchi SVD** The President of Caritas Asia

*Our Dear Friends in Caritas Sri Lanka,*

*In the name of our 23 Caritas Member Organizations in Asia, I heartily extend our congratulations to all of you on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Caritas Sri Lanka as the social and economic development arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka! Our entire Caritas family in Asia is one with you in commemorating the important milestones that you have gained and have contributed to society.*

*This momentous occasion is truly a celebration of the impressive strides and awe-inspiring growth that Caritas Sri Lanka has achieved all through these 50 years of dedicated service to the various sectors and communities in your country, as well as in the international community. It is a celebration that pays tribute to how Caritas Sri Lanka has withstood the test of times - the victories, the triumphs, and the successes, as well as, the disappointments, the challenges, and the struggles that were all part of its years of development.*

*As you know, while you are celebrating your 50th anniversary, we are also seeing the establishment of 2 new Caritas member organizations in Asia. I am confident that your long years of experience will serve as an inspiration to these 2 new developing Caritas members, as well as to the other existing member organizations in our region. I know that the magnificent achievements which you have realized and generously shared with various individuals, communities, and institutions will be a shining example for others to emulate. Your reputation as a beacon of integral human development will always be a strong motivation for others.*

*In my capacity as Regional President of Caritas Asia, I would also like to take this opportunity to personally commend all of you in Caritas Sri Lanka for your many years of honorable and faithful service to the institution, all of which have been the main reason for your success. Your dedication and commitment to your work are the very backbone of SEDEC's achievements. Without you, Caritas Sri Lanka would not have reached 50. You deserve a pat on the back!*

*Many congratulations on your Golden Jubilee! May God continue to bless you richly in all of your future endeavors.*

*Celebrating this joyous occasion with all of you.*



**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



## **Message from Mr. Michel Roy** Secretary General, Caritas Internationalis



*Looking back on these fifty years of service of SEDEC/Caritas Sri Lanka, I wish to express my admiration for the wonderful work you have carried out with undaunted courage and perseverance. Since its creation Caritas has been a source of service in dialogue to promote the dignity of the human person without distinction of caste, creed or ethnicity. In this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Populorum Progressio, a gift of Saint Pope Paul VI, it is good to recall that Caritas Sri Lanka's mission has been established along the lines of this encyclical: 'Promotion of all men and the whole human person'.*

*Even at the heights of the civil wars, Caritas stood by the principle of neutrality and service to all and through this service Caritas promoted dialogue by creating encounter between Buddhist, Christians and Hindus thus promoting reconciliation at the community level. One of the major achievements was the 2004 Tsunami disaster response which was done with professionalism, compassion, and high level of coordinated competencies. Caritas built more than ten thousand houses and took care of hundreds of thousands who were in total disarray after this major disaster. Caritas was instrumental in introducing the psychosocial support to the survivors and today, even the government has taken this as an essential part of the disaster response mechanism.*

*Caritas Sri Lanka was also a pioneer in the care for the migrants and internally displaced. Its work which is internationally known has contributed to alleviate the sufferings of thousands of innocent people who have fallen victim to unscrupulous human traffickers.*

*A special contribution of Caritas Sri Lanka to the Caritas Confederation has been the service of Fr. Joe Fernando. He served the Confederation as the Asia representative for many years and introduced the Asian touch to the general secretariat. Caritas Sri Lanka has gone through different difficult situations but it has always kept up to three basic principles: dialogue, respect of the differences and spirituality of social action which are the foundations of the success of its mission as Church in the service of the people of Sri Lanka.*

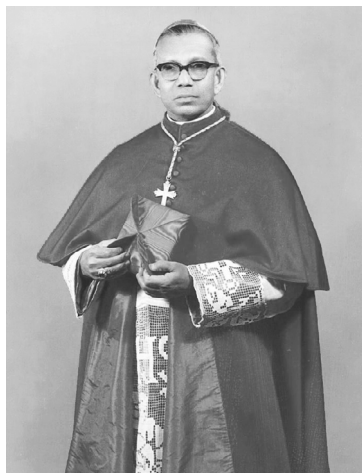
*I congratulate you on this important occasion and pray that Caritas continues to serve the people with fervent ardour.*



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## INTRODUCTION

*H*istory is the story of man within the framework of time. It brings into focus the vision and achievements he has carved from that experience. His successes and failures are his legacy to the generations that follow. The history of any organization or movement too is similar, for all organisations owe their vitality and continuity to those who in the initial stages, nourished and sustained them. The history of the Social Economic Development Centre (SEDEC) was no different, for, at its inception, it was directed by the dynamic vision and the determination of one man – a priest – Rev. Fr. Joe Fernando, who believed that the total development of man was the inalienable right of every human being.



**His Eminence  
Thomas Cardinal Cooray**

The teachings of Christ which emphasized the dignity of man and his inalienable right for justice and equal opportunities was the core of Fr. Joe's vision as he attempted to disseminate this concept, which was revolutionary, amidst the new ultra-nationalism which was seeking to establish its cultural and traditional religious concepts in a country that was yet influenced by colonial rule.

SEDEC was a result of the thinking by the hierarchy to provide a base whereby the social teachings of the Church could be disseminated, enacted and established. In order to understand this

decision of the Church in Sri Lanka for such an institution, one must go back to the period of its inception. Against the backdrop of Vatican II, the Church was concerned with the economic imbalance that prevailed. The neocolonialism of the era was as effective as the colonialism that had preceded when nations strived within various constraints to provide the basic needs of a people who were getting more and more dependent on subsidies and handouts. The Church viewed with consternation a situation where the integral development of man did not reflect his needs. Development was an outside factor, which impinged on his life.

Sri Lanka was no different from any Third World country. The State provided as best as it could, welfare measures and ironically the more the demand increased for welfare measures the less able was the State to provide the economic resources needed for the development of the people. A vicious circle of servitude engulfed the marginalized as they tended to get more and more dependent on either the State or benefactors. They looked for handouts which stifled not only their own initiative but also held their future to ransom. It was against this background that the mandate to set up a Social and Economic Centre which would free the marginalised and enable them to



**Rev. Fr. Joe Fernando  
First Director of SEDEC**

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obtain their inherent rights was given by the then Archbishop of Colombo, Thomas Benjamin Cooray OMI (who later became Cardinal), to Fr. Joe Fernando. The hierarchy provided the guidance and advice. However, the primary objective was to bring into focus the teachings of the Church with regard to social and economic problems.

The projected vision was that it would be the base to disseminate, by practice, the social doctrine of the Church which was evolved on the basic premise of love. In Sri Lanka, the ground situation that prevailed was one whereby the marginalised appeared to accept with resignation their life patterns but did so with an underlying sense of frustration and resentment. SEDEC was visualized to be the facilitator and motivator for creating a new strategy whereby man himself became the agent of change.



The choice of Fr. Fernando to set into operation the mandate of the Bishops was in no small measure due to the experience and the dynamism shown by him as early as the late 1940s, when he ventured out as a young parish priest to influence the fishermen to seek integral development. Sri Lanka, during this period, was undergoing the aftermath reaction of a country that had just received political freedom but had not yet developed any definite

programme for achieving economic stability. Sri Lanka had many natural resources but the economy continued to depend on primary crops.

Furthermore, independence from colonial administration brought in the potent identification of an ultra-nationalism whereby cultural revival superseded economic development. What was regarded as indigenous was given pride of place and the nationalism that was developing tended to regard the Catholics who were

about 7% of the population as adherents of a western-based religion and followers of a mode of living and thinking at variance with the emerging cultural resurgence. However, though some tacitly accepted this distinction, many were aware that the large majority of Catholics were vernacular educated teachers, small businessmen, farmers or skilled workers who had the same aspirations and frustrations as

their fellow non-Christians.

An important sector of the Catholic population was the fishing community. This community had participated actively in the preservation of Christianity during the era of Dutch persecution but, due to the precarious nature of their livelihood, they were one of the most marginalised in society. More than often they were



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

dependent on the owners of boats and nets to provide them with the instruments of livelihood. They saw no way out of their servitude to these 'mudalalis' and continued to live on borrowings with no hope either for them or their children to obtain economic sustainability. It was to this group that Fr. Joe Fernando, as a young parish priest, brought in his idealism and the force of the Social Doctrine of the Church. In his words, "Humanitarian enterprise must be inspired, animated and enveloped by charity drawn from one's own heart." The spirituality of social action was based on the logical recognition and acceptance of a charity that expressed the idea "To love the world as He loved it."



**Fr. Joe & Sr. Irene with a group of visitors to SEDEC office**

Fr. Joe wondered how it could be possible to believe in God's love and yet live without it in our own times. With this came the realization that people must be allowed the opportunity to decide and formulate their own development. Charity and handouts appeared to have a demoralizing and degrading effect on the sustained growth of the people.

Development planned from above did not take into consideration the persons' own aspirations and goals.

## The Commencement of the Long Journey

In 1949, in a very simple manner, Fr. Joe Fernando started a Co-operative Fishermen's Association at Sea Street. At this time he was not very familiar with the specific principles of the co-operative movement, but the concept of co-operative as a process for people-oriented development fascinated him and, he saw the impact it could have in changing the lives of fishermen whom he knew were both exploited and marginalised.



In this meticulous way with which Fr. Joe always sought to further his knowledge he contacted the Principal of the Cooperative School in Polgolla, Mr. Macdonald and requested information regarding the principles and methods of the co-operative movement. Mr. Macdonald, saw Fr. Joe as a person who would not be satisfied with brochures and literature and invited him to follow the classes. Fr. Joe not only became an eager pupil but his ideals of the co-operative movement gave him the strategy he needed to bring to the fishermen a different concept of economic independence. The fishermen's co-operative he initiated then, has now become a dynamic credit society for fishermen. It gave the fishermen a chance to realise that, out of their own efforts, they could develop and wean themselves away



from the dependency that had, for so many centuries, stifled their own human dignity. These societies were strongly resented by the middlemen, especially the money lenders, who by this system of providing credit by way of loans on exorbitant interest rates had managed to keep the fishermen dependent on them. Many were the times that Fr. Joe had to face treats and harassments from this sector who resented his views of providing the fishermen a method of breaking out of their web of debt. However, Fr. Joe continuously emphasized that the cooperative method of thrift and the loan scheme, which was an off-shoot of it, could be instrumental in breaking off the shackles that bound the fishermen to the money lenders. He managed to convince them that they could be the masters of their future. It was they who, by their own efforts, could break off the shackles of economic bondage and obtain the social and economic development they desired.

During this period, as was, in most Third World countries, the principles of the co-operative movement were gathering momentum. The Sri Lankan experience as evolved by Fr. Joe Fernando, was gaining popularity not only as a mode of development for the fishing community but also for other marginalised communities. Meanwhile, in Canada, Msgr. (Dr.) Moses Michael Coady, known as an adult educator had in the University of St. Francis Xavier in Antigonish, Nova Scotia started a specific course for the development of fishermen's co-operatives.

In 1956, Fr. Joe was granted the privilege by the Archbishop of Colombo, Thomas Benjamin Cooray OMI, (to visit the University of St. Francis Xavier in Antigonish and learn the logistics of setting up more comprehensive fishermen's cooperatives. The

visit of Fr. Joe to the University was originally for a period of three months but it extended to two years. Fr. Joe had the good fortune of learning from Dr. Coady himself. It was an experience that gave him the incentive he needed to continue the work he had embarked on. When he came back with a degree in Social Development, Sri Lanka was yet struggling with the inability to provide a method of sustainable development for the people and was experimenting with different economic 'isms'. Fr. Joe believed that the Co-operative Movement as a genuine, people-oriented and people-sustained, movement was the most effective method whereby people could be animated to work out their own development. The co-operative system which expressed the united will of a group of persons who sought their own development, could be the catalyst of change in a society where the economically disadvantaged were always at the receiving end of hand-outs and charity.

Fr. Joe commenced the establishment of fishermen's co-operative and took on such issues as the Madel problem, and the difficulties faced by migrant fishermen. Through a network of saving and credit societies he assisted fishermen to move away from the controlling influences of the mudalalis (owners of the boats and nets). By the extension of the co-operative principle, in time, they become the owners of their own boats and nets.

With this development of the fisheries co-operatives Fr. Joe had, in a sense, set the strategy for the Church to venture out, and bring to the forefront the initiatives for sustainable growth. At a meeting in Rome, it was suggested to Fr. Joe by Fr. James Morris,





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Assistant to Catholic Relief Services, that a relief service be established in Sri Lanka to provide and facilitate development.

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The Archbishop of Colombo, Thomas Cardinal Cooray was in Rome when the suggestion was made that Sri Lanka sets up an establishment to deal with relief issues. Cardinal Cooray, the first Sri Lankan to hold the office of Archbishop of Colombo, had always felt keenly the plight of the unique role that the Church, with its vibrant social doctrine could play in assisting the emerging independence of the people.

However, it was necessary that the organisation should have a dynamic dedicated priest to guide it in its initial stages. The Sea Street Fisheries Co-operatives had proved that Fr. Joe Fernando had the experience and commitment to give the necessary impetus to an organisation which would give vision to the social doctrine of the Church.



**Thomas Cardinal Cooray  
with Fr. Joe**

Fr. Lucian Schmidt, who was closely associated with Fr. Joe and had shared his enthusiasm in setting up co-operatives, was then the Vicar General in Colombo. He suggested that the Sea Street experience be expanded to cover the whole island. His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray suggested that it was opportune to establish an institute for Social Development in Sri Lanka which would work not only in diocesan level but be national and reach out to all sectors of the community.



**Rev. Fr. Lucian Schmidt  
(on to the right)**

The outcome of this discussion was what eventually led to the Social and Economic Development Centre (SEDEC) being established and naturally its direction was left in the able and experienced hands of Fr. Joe Fernando.

*"If each one of you does his best courageously it will help in no small measure to establish the kingdom of Christ on earth, this is indeed a kingdom of truth and of life; a kingdom of holiness and grace; a kingdom of love and peace"*

- Pope John Paul XXIII



### Formation of National SEDEC

*"They should show themselves animated by a spirit of understanding, an unselfishness, ready to cooperate loyally in achieving objects which are good in themselves or can be turned to good".*

- Pope John XXIII

In 1968, when Fr. Joe Fernando was given the task of establishing the Social and Economic Development Centre (SEDEC), his main concept on the working of the organization was based on the 1967 encyclical of Saint Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*. Of special interest to him was the concept of man's aspirations, as expressed in this document. This meant freedom from misery, the greater assurance of finding sustenance, health and fixed employment; an increased share of responsibility without oppression of any kind and security from situations that do violence to their dignity as men and, a better education. In brief, man's aspirations were to seek to do more and have more in order to be more; that is what man wishes to obtain.



However, a greater number of them are condemned to live in conditions that make this lawful desire illusory. Besides, countries that had recently gained the experience of national independence, needed in addition to political freedom, a fitting autonomous growth - social as well as economic - in order to ensure that their

citizens attain full human enhancement, which will enable them to take their rightful place among other nations. Influenced by his studies and fired with the enthusiasm and determination to establish a viable institution, Fr. Joe set about establishing the resources needed for a work of such dimension.

In any institution, a name is important to project an image and much discussion went into the choice of a definite name for the newly established organization. Finally, it was decided to call it the Social and Economic Development Centre, with the acronym SEDEC as its identifying title. 'SEDEQ' in its original Hebrew form, stands for justice and righteousness and SEDEC, a variation of this word rightly brought into focus the concepts of the social teachings of the Church. However, for a short while, differences of opinion with regard to this name arose.



**Youth leadership programme**

The Church authorities, for a time, changed it to "The National Committee for Social Action," possibly because the Church wished to emphasise that it was the social action arm of the Church as it initially acted as a funnel for funds received from Catholic- related agencies abroad for development and charity work. However, later the name SEDEC was reasserted since it indicated not only its fundamental commitments but also the fact that it sought to establish itself as a National Movement and not as a partisan or parochial structure.





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

Today, as we see the structural and organizational growth of SEDEC and used as we are to a developed technology, it is difficult to imagine the initial inception SEDEC. The original office, which was set up at Archbishops' House, Colombo 8, consisted of two tables, six chairs and one typewriter.



**Ms. Marie Fernando**

In the 1970's, SEDEC moved its office to 45, Kynsey Road, (the present Social Communications Centre) and had on its staff only the late Sr. Irene Seneviratne and Marie Fernando, who fortunately for SEDEC, remained in its service till 1996. She provided continuity and saw the unfolding of its history from this limited inception to the national organization it has now become.

The main objective during this initial stage was, firstly, to incorporate the newly formulated institution into the Church structure and secondly, to establish contact with the related government organizations. Fr. Joe wryly admitted that attaining these objectives was indeed a difficult task. Very few, even within the Church, had any detailed knowledge of the teachings of Populorum Progressio. Fr. Joe who believed that creating awareness was the first step in establishing knowledge, found himself busy during this initial



**Rev. Sr. Irene Seneviratne  
FMM**

period trying to persuade both clergy and lay groups of the need for social development. It was indeed an uphill task and special concentration was directed towards educating and animating persons at a diocesan level.

The concept of animation in social development was yet a new concept and Fr. Joe, during this period was anxious to emphasise two aspects, one, "or the Christian perspective, animation is the work of the spirit, inspiring people with the Gospel values of the kingdom," the other, "animators should identify those positive religio-cultural values among people, support them, accompany them, announce them and criticise and denounce negative values among people." The animator must resonate with the poor in such a way as to discover the religio-cultural values of people that are genuine Gospel values. SEDEC, under the leadership of Fr Joe, established the principles of democratic partnership, which are based on teamwork, that is, 'to think together, work together and share together'. On the principles, it followed, that thinking together had to be a continuous process of action and reflection. It was the basis of teamwork. SEDEC emphasised that decisions should be made not as individuals but as members of a team working together.



**Medical Clinic for disaster victims**

This meant that action was the responsibility of the team and the result was in the sharing that provided a reflection and an evaluation. The aims and objectives of SEDEC, as set out at this initial period, were to spread

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the spirit of charity and social justice. It was meant to provide integral human development and its ultimate goal was a full and abundant life for everyone in the community. SEDEC formulated these objectives on the belief and conviction that common people or the masses have a great potential within themselves and that this should be released through education and enlightenment. To achieve these objectives, SEDEC aimed at promotional work to make people not only objects of service, but subjects of their own improvement and masters of their own destinies.



**Providing relief items to disaster victims**

Fr. Joe, through SEDEC, wanted to bring to the knowledge of the marginalised that they could create their own institutions for their own liberation. It was their right to improve the quality of their life.

In other words, Fr. Joe wished to emphasise that SEDEC envisaged the creation of a new society where people will treat each other as brothers and sisters.

In order to implement its objective, SEDEC, specified the activities and facilities it could provide. While it would deal with the relief measures necessary in natural disasters and provide emergency aid such as rehabilitation and welfare services, it would mainly concentrate in the direct pursuance of its objective, by providing animation for group action to bring about greater economic

growth and decent living. SEDEC concentrated, at this period on projects that had the purpose of educating people to think together, work together and share together to create their own institutions and structures according to their specific need and in accordance to the rules formulated by them.

SEDEC was also concerned with commencing concretization programmes for special needs and was directly involved in exemplary projects such as 'Janavasams'.



**Community leadership training**

To reach the objectives which appeared very ambitious to many, since, in Sri Lanka the notion of people-oriented development was yet new, SEDEC provided animation through training courses

and organized community health programmes and leadership programmes, especially for the youth.

*"There are three stages which should be followed in the application of social principle into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly one forms a judgment on it in the light of the same principle; thirdly one decides what, in the circumstances, should be done to implement these principles."*

- Pope John XXIII



### The Formative Years

In these formative years SEDEC was under the administrative direction of a Board of Governors, the Secretary of which was the National Director. It also had an Executive Committee and a Technical Committee to advise. During these initial years due to the constant animation-training programmes Fr. Joe was conducting as a result of his persuasive determination, a few Diocesan Centres were established and diocesan leaders appointed. Though the concepts of the movement were not too defined at this early stage, some projects and even individual charities, based on development, were encouraged and assisted by SEDEC.

This initial growth period of these Diocesan Centres was of crucial importance to the vision of SEDEC as envisaged by Fr. Joe, since it had to disseminate among a wider spectrum of



**A protest organised by SEDEC**

persons and institutions, that development of people meant, not what was envisaged by the planners, but what was decided by the people themselves. In most Third World countries, development was often the outcome of well-meaning persons deciding on the type of project that a marginalised group should have, regardless of whether that group wanted it or not. Due to this, very many projects floundered and did not have the continuity necessary to

create a change in life patterns. SEDEC, in its embryonic stage had to create and motivate in the newly formed centres, an awareness of its objectives while emphasising the spiritual significance of social action.

In an evaluation report of the activities of SEDEC during this period, it was stated: "At the level of the ensemble of action, the evolution of the number of projects is neither progressive nor constant. The period from 1968 to the end of 1970, corresponds to the launching of SEDEC and is characterised by a slow progression in the numbers of projects financed. This appears to have been mainly due to the fact that Centre leaders had to be further trained, animated and motivated whilst also emphasising that SEDEC, as the social arm of the Church, would to a great extent, be the obtaining agent for project funding."

Unfortunately, the 1971 Insurgency proved a setback to project orientation. The report earlier quoted states that during this period, only seven projects were accepted. The insurgency shook, not only the social structure of the country, but affected very strongly, grass-root communities. It was an insurgency that had its roots in the economic dissatisfaction experienced by rural youth.

SEDEC was compelled by the situation that existed to get actively involved in the rehabilitation of the youth who had been instrumental or had been influenced by this insurgency. This was, in a sense, an area far removed from the original concepts Fr. Joe had, which was based on his experience of the principles of co-operatives among fishermen. It required a different type of expertise and dynamism to move in to the field of rehabilitation,





but it was useful in that it provided an insight in to the thinking of the youth and from that arose the need for the greater animation of youth for integral development.

Structurally, in 1974, SEDEC underwent another change; this was to some extent due to a crisis in the administrative situation. According to the evaluation report by Msgr. Houtart: "At the time of its founding SEDEC found itself endowed, by the Episcopal Conference, with an administrative council whose members, chosen by the episcopacy, were all either functionaries or persons pertaining to the business and financial milieu. Those in charge of the Executive on the other hand, were religious agents with experience in grass-root social action. From the beginning, ideological differences appeared between the two entities. The first had the tendency to consider development within a technocratic perspective in strictly economic terms, the members of the executive office were less preoccupied with the efficiency and profitability of the material input but more by the educational and pastoral aspect of the projects. These two positions proved irreconcilable and finally the administrative entity was reorganized in 1974."



**Fr. Lucian Schmidt (on to the left)** It was at this period that Fr. Lucian Schmidt came to take charge of the administration. His expertise and efficiency in administrative skills, was an invaluable asset to SEDEC at this time. It also gave Fr. Joe Fernando a greater opportunity to reach out to the dioceses and through them, to the grass-root level organizations.

## **New Programmes for Youth Rehabilitation**

During the period 1974-1976, the administrative setup of SEDEC was efficiently consolidated by Fr. Lucian Schmidt and this enabled SEDEC to carry out its essential mission. To quote Msgr. Houtart again, "The three years which followed 1973-1975, constitute a period of intense activity, 68% of all projects, 75% of the economic type, 60% of education and 63% of the services, were financed and put into operation during this period. This growth was not only due to the result of the reorganization of SEDEC and the diversification of its activities. It also contained the participation of the ecclesiastical institutions, through the mediation of religious agents in the effort for youth rehabilitation launched by political authorities following the 1971 insurgency."

SEDEC took over the rehabilitation of a number of insurgent leaders and succeeded in giving them guidance and assistance to work and serving people using their own special attitudes, aptitudes, skills and abilities rather



**Life skill Training for youth**

than violence. It even absorbed a few leaders to the staff to serve as community development officers and animators. SEDEC showed here that it was possible to use the innate idealism of youth to provide leadership of a nonviolent nature. The insurgency also opened a different avenue of work for SEDEC.



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The youth revolt was to a great extent, due to the economic imbalance and disparity that existed. Rural youth had very limited employment opportunities and the Government in its programme of redress and rehabilitation felt that a solution to this problem lay in providing greater avenues of employment for rural youth.



**Addressing the youth during the insurgency in 1971**

All religious institutions were a multiplication of initiatives such as the establishment of community farms, training centres, repair shops, small commercial enterprises etc. SEDEC, decided to give a different orientation

to these projects. Animators felt that the development of rural groups of small farmers or agricultural wage earners could not be effectively achieved without creating unity among the groups. Hence, projects tended to be oriented towards consolidation of grass-root communities.

During this period, SEDEC undertook a series of experimental projects for particular groups such as fishermen, tea plantation workers, persons displaced as a result of government colonization policies etc. It also embarked on community health service programmes emphasising preventive medicine. This change in dimension brought a new concept in the activities of SEDEC, shifting the emphasis from small projects to projects by sector of activity. Furthermore, due to the insurgency, youth and adult

education programmes too received new emphasis.

The need to re-awaken, in both clergy and the laity, their vocation to social action and bring in the spirituality of the Catholic faith to social concerns tackling ground realities became a priority at this time. During this period great emphasis was laid on training and animation courses so as to achieve this objective. These courses were first started at the Aloka Animation Centre, Aquinas Collage of Higher Education in Borella. They were residential courses conducted by two persons trained in animation. The courses were much appreciated and provided the basic formation for the animation courses, which are conducted by SEDEC, to date.

Meanwhile, Fr. Schmidt left Sri Lanka to head the Asian Desk at MISSIO in 1976 and once again Fr. Joe had to shoulder the task to guiding the organization in its administration and also continue the programme of animation. In addition to the specific project, SEDEC continued handling emergency relief measures too as an when occasion demanded, such as providing flood relief assistance. However, it was apparent that a strong structural administrative basis be established, especially since SEDEC was regarded by many of the funding agencies as the organization that could effectively channel their funds and provide evaluation.



## **Building of a Structural Base**

In 1976, for the first time, a layman was appointed as administrator to SEDEC. Mr. Basil Ilangakoon was no stranger to the SEDEC philosophy as he had been one of the lecturers at the Aloka Animation Centre. He had also been very actively involved with Fr. Joe in project appraisal and evaluation. When he joined the SEDEC team, the time was opportune for SEDEC to have a more definitive structural base. Mr. Basil Ilangakoon had worked for a time at Marga Institute as a Research Officer and had considerable experience and administrative skills. He was well versed in the social teachings of the Church therefore, his choice at this important period in SEDEC's history, was of great relevance.



**Mr. Basil Ilangakoon**

He was committed to formulate an infrastructure for SEDEC that would assist in strengthening and continuing the spiritual vision that Fr. Joe was attempting to establish. Being a pragmatic person, Mr. Ilangakoon believed that unless the process of evolution and planning came into operation, SEDEC would not be able to satisfy the agencies that were providing funding for integral development.

SEDEC, by this time, had been accepted by the major funding agencies of Europe as the chief agency for channeling funds. His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Anthony De Saram was in charge of SEDEC but he left the task of formulating guidelines of SEDEC and its networking capacity, both, as a National Centre and as a link Centre for the Dioceses to Mr. Ilangakoon. In order to strengthen the development of SEDEC, comprehensive grass-root leadership programmes commenced in the training centres that were opened up in villages. These centres catered to those of other faiths as well. Training at village level and providing leadership animation brought in an awareness of the methodology Mr. Ilangakoon was anxious to develop. He believed in the Chinese proverb which said one should not provide fish to satisfy the momentary hunger of man, but rather should provide him with a fishing rod whereby he could obtain the fish he required. In other words the onus for development lay on the person who required that development and, was not based on the manipulations and decisions of a central authority.

These years were also important to SEDEC for, in the funding agencies too, there was a shift in priorities. The earlier emphasis on charitable handouts for individual or isolated projects now changed drastically to be funds for development oriented specific programmes.

In a paper presented by Mr. Ilangakoon, he touches briefly on the work done during this period "In the development activities undertaken by SEDEC during the last ten years, the programmes all aimed at mobilising the people through education and organization to seek justice in all human





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

situations. Very often, even in its Caritas work, SEDEC has sought to build a development component where justice based on a true understanding of their situation would underscore all disbursement of charitable assistance'. He continues by describing the various projects SEDEC was involved in at this time. Some of these projects were the Fisheries Community Development programme, the Plantation Workers' Development programme, the 'Gam Waduma' or Integrated Rural Development programme for peasant farming communities mainly in the upper regions of the North Western province and the districts of Hambantota, Monaragala and Amparai. Other programmes included a programme for the rehabilitation, resettlement and integration of transmigrants in the North and the East and the Mahaweli Community Development Building programmes.

In the words of Mr. Illangakoon, "If one is looking for a few words to describe the ultimate objectives of this programme, it is to let the people decide. This concern of ours to allow the people to be free, results from the way in which we have analyzed and understood the present social conditions prevailing in the country. Today our society is developing a dependency which is so complex and so strong that even those who dominate are themselves within its powerful structure and are unable to break away. Even if they want to, these problems have been thrown into sharp relief now that the government is attempting to pull back certain social welfare measures, partly because of their economic causes and partly because it allows the manipulation of the people by such welfare delivery systems. But the people themselves are so tightly caught up in the system that they often react against the pulling back of so called benefits without realising that what are to be cut off are in fact those very forces that control and manipulate people."

Mr. Illangakoon then goes on to describe that SEDEC's commitment was a "pre-occupation of development of a non-dominated society in Sri Lanka, based on a conviction that people cannot realise their full potential unless they are their own masters. Hence what we seek to achieve through our programmes are a people free from bondage inflicted on them by manipulation. We believe that this liberation could be achieved by helping each family to develop in an economically self reliant manner, thereby assuring a social self content and by educating their families to work in a self-reliant basic community with the ultimate goal of an economically self reliant basic nation proud of its past but confident of its present and ready to take its rightful place in an interdependent world. To achieve these objectives, it was necessary, in a sense, to create a reorientation of thoughts among a community that were often reluctant to venture into new areas of thought and also who had very little experience in formulating their own ideas of development."

Hence, Mr. Illangakoon concentrated in creating training courses which could mobilise the people to be the animators and motivators of their own destiny. Classical non-formal education became a strategic method for "conscientisation and seeding development." The essential purpose of the courses were, to create an awareness of the contemporary needs and aspirations of society, to analyze and assess those needs and aspirations; to train leaders equipped with knowledge and skills to work with the people; to affect social change in education and to help finally, to organize people-oriented programmes and projects. The training courses were geared to share a Christian vision of the individual and of society. In order to attain these objectives the administrative organization was strengthened with the regional centres and the national secretariat functioning as autonomous entities. The concept of



autonomy in this respect involved independent thought and action on matters of day to day administration and programme selection. In matters of board policy, all units operated and coordinated on the basis of equal partnership. The staff of SEDEC was increased to fifty-five. Study, research and documentation became the key areas of administration. In addition, a system of daily reports by community development officers to the coordinators brought into SEDEC an efficiency that enabled its smooth functioning. It also provided the framework to develop the association with Government agencies, which Fr. Joe Fernando had been anxious to establish. One of the most interesting experiences at this time was the concept of development through a cluster or circle of villages.

Under this programme SEDEC was instrumental in animation and thereafter the development of a housing programme at Saranagama. This programme was regarded by the Government of that time as a model in all aspects of planning, animation, training and sustainability which was the need for any integral development programme. In Galagamuwa too, a community development circle of seven villages was animated. This group commenced and continued an integrated programme bringing into the community priorities they felt were needed, such as wells, cleaning of small tanks for irrigation and a mini housing scheme. Mr. Basil Illangakoon's tenure of office was important to SEDEC in that it provided for the future development by systemizing the structure of SEDEC and consolidating the administrative base.

The cyclone in the Eastern Province and its devastating repercussions on the people of that area gave SEDEC a different opportunity to expand on its objectives. Fr. Joe Fernando led the SEDEC team to work in the cyclone-affected area. A cyclone

rehabilitation centre and a project, 'Piyasa' was set up. The main concept here was a programme of rehabilitation based on development. The rehabilitation centre concentrated on the animation and education of community leaders to decide on their own priorities with regard to rehabilitation and development. In this process, people from all creeds, castes and communities, levelled by disaster to a common entity worked unitedly to seek sustainable programmes.



**Cyclone in the Eastern Province - 1978**

In 1978, the University of St. Francis Xavier Nova Scotia, in recognition of Fr. Joe's contribution to the development of people, awarded a honorary doctoral degree at a convocation held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the

Antigonish Movement. In 1980, Fr. Joe Fernando was released to take up work at Caritas Internationalis.

*"My real programme of governance is not to do my own will, not to pursue my own ideas, but to listen, together with whole church, to the word and the will of the Lord, to be guided by Him."*

- Pope Benedict XVI

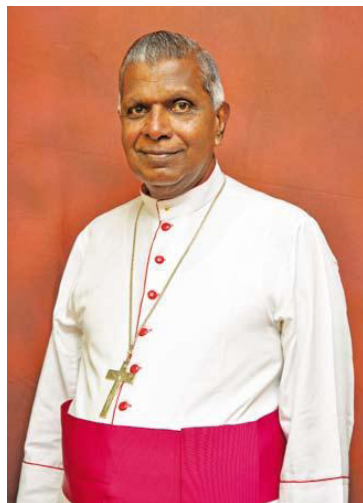




### Spirituality and Social Justice

In the SEDEC office a change had occurred with Mr. Basil Illangakoon leaving and Rev. Fr. Joseph Vianney Fernando (later Bishop), taking over as Director in 1981. During his tenure of office he emphasised the spirituality of social action with a greater emphasis on the educational aspect of it, the whole purpose of social action is the fulfillment given by Jesus, 'I came so that you may have life and have it in abundance' (John 10-10). When we talk of spirituality of social action it is the self-emptying spirituality of Jesus and Jesus was in constant dialogue with the poor as well as the powerful and the rich. Our social actions as followers of Christ have to be vested in the same values and attitudes. Bishop Vianney speaking of his experience as National Director of SEDEC said, "There is no divergence between justice and peace and human development. They are of the same apostolate." Bishop Vianney's (then Father) directorship, development reflected both these aspect. His Lordship put into effect, the concepts that "Development was another name for peace," as one of the key areas of SEDEC.

During this period, while the work of SEDEC continued, a paradigm shift took place concerning the principles of such



**Msgr. Vianney Fernando**

development. Development accentuated the path to peace. The integral development of man was a necessary condition for peace. In this sense one should see here a change in that when SEDEC was established in 1968, the Commission of Peace and Justice had two secretariats, one was the commission for Human Development, the other was the Secretariat for Justice and Peace. Each operated within its own parametres and in the early years His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Bishop Leo Nanayakkara OSB, took up the causes of justice. He highlighted the situation of the workers, both in the plantation sector and the problems of factory workers and championed the cause of agricultural labour and was in the forefront on matters concerning the dignity of labour. SEDEC concentrated more on human development.



**Rev. Fr. Vianney with Mr. Basil Illangakoon**

Under the directorship of Fr. Vianney Fernando, an amalgamation of thought took place. Peace was possible only under conditions of justice. Development was another name for peace.

Fr. Vianney introduced a national consensus every year with areas of exposure so that all those concerned with education and animation would understand the ground reality. It was also during this time that the Women's Desk came into its own and extended its influence to cover all aspect of womens' development.



The system of networking with the Diocesan Centres on national issues too came into operation under Fr. Vianney who emphasised that animation of people should be based on their own awareness of dignity, rights and responsibilities. People had to decide, animate and empower. This shift in priorities led to a further development of SEDEC and a greater emphasis was laid, not only on programmes for animators, but also on the choice of animators.

*"The church aims to contribute to the purification of reason and to the reawakening of those moral forces without which just structures are neither established nor prove effective in the long run."*

-Pope Benedict XVI



### Peoples' Self Help Groups



**Rev. Fr. Vincent Dep**

When Fr. Vianney took over as a Bishop of Kandy, Rev. Fr. Vincent Dep was appointed as Director of SEDEC in 1983. His main concern was in developing the Janasaviya concept or peoples' self-help groups. This later developed into the Self-Integral Development Education Processes (SIDEPE). Animation and education at grass-root level became the main tools of development. Influenced by the Coady co-operative concepts, SEDEC commenced as a foundation for development projects, thrift and credit handling. Fr. Dep took into consideration that women were more committed to creating a better environment for families. Therefore he concentrated on developing small-scale credit societies for women.

During this period, there was a concerted effort to get women more actively involved in development issues. Women were naturally concerned with obtaining economic freedom from the servitude that prevailed and for this purpose the essential need was capital, both for self-help projects and for rural consumer needs.

Hence, it was easy to mobilise women to participate in setting up credit and thrift societies. These societies helped them to collect their meagre savings and gradually redeem them from the controlling hold of money lenders.



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The development of the women's sector and its far reaching results in grass-root organizations was recognised by international agencies as an innovation of considerable impact. Marie Fernando, who was, to a great extent, responsible and active in the animation and development of this sector, was appointed by the Asian Partnership for Human Development (APHD), as South Asian coordinator for the Women's Desk.

Fr. Dep believed that credit and thrift societies could provide the necessary funding. Hence, dependence on foreign funding alone was not an essential component of development. Grass-root development could take place through the medium of credit and thrift societies.



**Addressing the members of Village Women Society**

The ethnic riots in 1983 saw SEDEC bringing into focus all the objectives of its establishment. The Emergency Desk came into prominence to deal with the immediate problems. During the years by

the various programmes it had put into operation, SEDEC had established very close rapport with the government sector and various NGO's committed to grass-root development. When the riots broke out the government, aware of SEDEC's operative network, assigned it the task of reporting on the sufficiency of the food supply in the camps in the Colombo district.

SEDEC was also given the responsibility of running two refugees camps one in Kotahena and the other Avissawella. The emergency desk responded with quiet efficiency to the problems of refugees in districts other than Colombo and what started as refugee assistance provided by the Diocesan Centres in Trincomalee, Mannar and Jaffna, has today been converted to one of the most challenging and continuous programmes of SEDEC. It also emphasises the ability of SEDEC to adapt to different situations with quick adjustably and efficiency.



*"A man of humanity is one who in seeking to establish himself, finds a foothold for others and who desiring attainment helps others to attain it."*

- Confucious





## **Animation**

In 1986, Rev. Fr. Peter Charles was appointed as the Director of SEDEC. He too emphasised that integral human development was an essential feature of SEDEC. In order to implement and sustain the vision of SEDEC he concentrated on the choice of animators. It was very necessary that the animators knew the methodology of SEDEC in order to reach the marginalised and animate them to on their own



**Rev. Fr. Peter Charles**

priorities. Commenting on the continuing need for emergency relief necessitated by the ongoing conflict, he said, “I feel that those situations are the need of the time, but too much of emphasis should not be given, nor should it be spread for longer periods than necessary, as man’s development goes beyond these immediate needs. Stress should be given to integral development, the other matters are issue oriented and work should be designed whenever possible even in such situations to provide for development. The animator’s job is to do so.”

Accordingly, Fr. Peter Charles concentrated on the training of animators. It was the animators task to take into consideration the ground situation and encourage develop and mobilise the community; always thinking in terms of integral human

development. This was of special value in order to provide and support the victims of the second insurgency. The European Funding Agencies too emphasised this role of the animator. SEDEC restructured its programmes of animator training and provided training facilities for diocesan leaders and coordinators. However, due to the continuing unsettled conditions in the country and escalating terrorism, rehabilitation and relief became an important aspect of SEDEC, with the National Centre assisting with relief measures, those Diocesan Centres which were affected both by the influx of refugees and the displacement of persons. However, as far as possible, SEDEC concentrated in creating for development within the constraints of rehabilitation by setting up self-help projects in refugee camps, assisting in preventive health services and often combining basic education programmes, especially for pre-school children.



### Empowerment

In 1990, Fr, Camillus took over. His term was extremely short as he was appointed Provincial of the OMI on 1991. Fr. Camillus, during his short tenure of office, consolidated the work of the earlier Directors to strengthen the existing structure and also provide greater flexibility in reacting to immediate situations. On his departure to take over as Provincial, OMI Fr. Oswald Firth OMI was appointed Director. Fr. Firth brought with him a dynamism and vision, which projected development to cover peace and justice issues.



**Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando  
OMI**

During this period, SEDEC's emphasis was spread over two different areas, one was concerned with empowering the people and the formulation of people's forums to deal with specific development issues, the other was the concern for peace and justice issues. This diversification was due to the situation in the country. Meanwhile, a shift in emphasis occurred in the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL). From the time of His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray and the initial inception of SEDEC, Bishops had been appointed by the CBCSL to be in charge of SEDEC. Firstly, in 1968, Cardinal Cooray charge and thereafter His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Anthony de Saram was entrusted with

this task. Later His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Leo Nanayakkara came in and brought with him visions of a society that recognised the rights and dignity of every individual. But with His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando placed in charge of SEDEC, the CBCSL unified the aspects of Justice and Human Development and titled it Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development.

In 1989, Bishop Raymond Peiris was appointed by the CBCSL as Chairman of the peace and Justice Commission. This was a period when the country was facing traumatic experience of the insurgency by the JVP which led to southern violence against what was perceived as an attempt by the government to establish a quasi-federal system by the signing of the Indo Sri Lanka Accord, the 13th amendment to the constitution and establishment of Provincial Councils and the invitation to the Indian Peace keeping Force to establish peace in the North and the Eastern Provinces. This period saw unprecedented violence in the south and SEDEC attempted to bring about a national consultation.



Bishop Raymond Peiris sought to bring about understanding among the communities. He visited the districts of Mannar, Anuradhapura and the border villages. His vision was to impress on all communities that



‘the most important thing that was of concern was that everyone was a human being who needed understanding and assistance’ And SEDEC was dynamic and sufficiently vibrant to assist him to develop his vision.



The JVP 2<sup>nd</sup> insurgency and the troubled conditions brought about violence and instability. SEDEC, in view of

its commitment to the integral development of man, took on those issues that were now in the forefront of concerns and commenced a series of new ventures. Some of these pertained to the consequences of the open economy and the effects of liberalization and globalization; others were those specifically geared to the prevailing violence, hence projects were started for the victims of Southern violence. These were essentially projects for the families affected by the insurgency where often the breadwinner was either killed or had gone missing and the wife and children had to fend for themselves. Within the existing climate of suspicion and fear, many were reluctant to assist them, SEDEC stepped in with a program to help such victims.

*“Dialogue should be recognized as the means by which the various components of society can articulate their point of view and build consensus around the truth concerning particular values or goals.”*

- Pope Benedict XVI

## **Dynamism of Social Action**



**Rev. Fr. Oswald B. Firth OMI**

Rev. Fr. Oswald Firth’s main philosophy was based on the concept that SEDEC could be instrumental in providing avenues of empowerment to the marginalised and displaced. He believed that the Diocesan Centres were strong enough to take up developmental issues in their areas, provide animation education and co-ordinate programmes. In order to further the diocesan base from

project orientation to programmes, an experimental three year period was set, with emphasis on animation and training. In Fr. Firth’s opinion, SEDEC itself had a more dynamic role to play, that was to project national issues and mobilise public opinion and participation, not only through the diocesan coordinators but also from people’s forums.

In Fr. Firth’s vision, the people would be instrumental in changing situations and providing for a just society. During this period, fell the centenary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical on capital and labour - Rerum Novarum. This papal encyclical of 1891, which addressed the conditions of the working class during the 19th century industrial revolution, was the first step towards the inauguration of Catholic Social Doctrine. Fr. Firth thus wished to





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emphasise the Social Doctrines of the Church with the reality facing the country. For this purpose he embarked on a scheme of providing 700 animators chosen from the dioceses, a training course on the Social Doctrines of the Church. At the culmination of the course, in a programme held at the Public Library, each diocese dramatised different aspects of the social teachings of the Church. Fr. Firth's wider concept of SEDEC meant that integral development of man was dependent on peace and justice.

Sri Lanka, at this time, was also feeling the impact of globalization which further meant that the economy was becoming more and more dependent on foreign investment.



**Justice Mark Fernando with Fr. Firth**

Globalization, with its attendant concepts of liberalisation and privatisation, did not take as essential, development at grass-root level, which was a necessary priority in a marginalised society. Economic programmes at grass-root level based on foreign investment were often rejected by the community and SEDEC joined with other religious organizations to express the disapproval of the rural community of such projects.

This situation was further aggravated, since these projects meant that relocation of the community was necessary. The Chairman, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond PIERIS, together with the National Director Fr. Firth, strongly believed that sufficient study

had not gone into the impact of these investments especially since no programmes had been developed to ensure that the dislocated families could pursue their accustomed methods of livelihood.

Another innovation took place at this time. In earlier instances, SEDEC had interlinked its programmes with the different religious and communal groups in an area. Now it was decided that a greater inter-religious dialogue should take place concerning the holistic development of man. In order, to widen the impact and influence of SEDEC, it was thought necessary to develop links with other Non-Governmental organizations, both Christian and non-Christian. Once again here is seen a shift in the paradigm of SEDEC's priorities. Inter-religious core groups were set up and an international peace delegation visited the North. A peace march was organized. SEDEC at this time was instrumental in assisting the establishment and growth of the National Peace Council.



**Fr. Firth at a discussion with Community Leaders**

those at grass-root level, on all matters pertaining to the people. Networking with other dioceses and other NGO groups on these issues too became one of the features of SEDEC during this period.

In the same context, while this concentration was directed towards peace initiatives, SEDEC attempted to project the viewpoint of the affected, especially

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Another important programme undertaken by SEDEC during this period was the translation of the encyclicals of Pope Paul VI so that greater awareness could be obtained by the laity of the significance of the social doctrines of the Church. A shift in development objectives too took place. It was noted that realised projects created islands of prosperity but did not provide the necessary animation for integral development of all within a community. Hence the programme approach was emphasised with greater concentration on animation training for strategic planning. The assistance of Asian Partnership for Human Development (APHD) was obtained for this. A network based on the 1993 consensus was put into effect with four identifiable sectors: Women, Fisheries, Public Sector and Farming. The Diocesan Centers too were encouraged to follow this same pattern, if it was in keeping with their requirements.

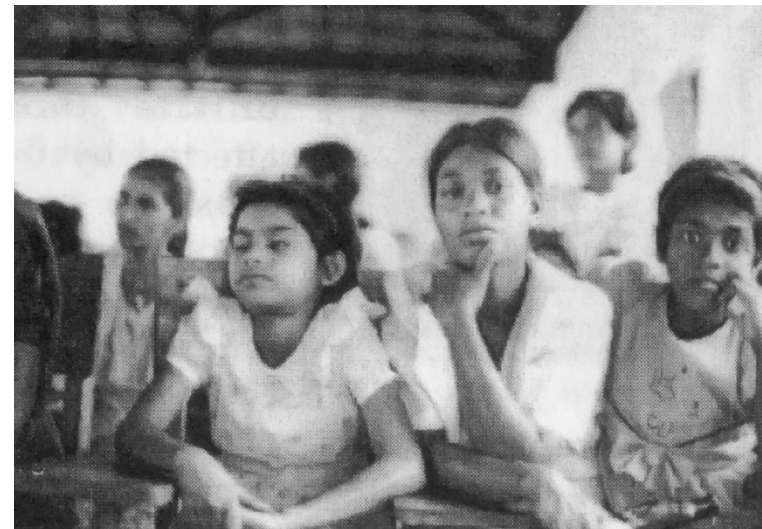
The identity of SEDEC as conceptualised by Fr. Firth during this period was “committed persons both individual and collective, working for the Church’s social concerns which involve the major issues in the country such as the ethnic problem, the war, poverty and the economy, development and politics.” Fr. Firth’s concept of the change which he felt should be the guidelines for a National SEDEC was expressed in the document presented to the National Pastoral Convention.

He expressed the thought that the National SEDEC should be the visible and active arm of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Administratively, since SEDEC was not geared for such a plan of action, it was decided by Fr. Firth to obtain the services of more

qualified personnel to head the different divisions and in 1991 graduates were taken in for this purpose.

Further, since Justice, Peace and Development issues were all under one head, it was decided to bifurcate the work into two specific sections. SEDEC once more saw a structural change as each section was given the task of developing its own methodology, animation training and leadership, to put into operation the vision of the director.

*“What does the Lord require of you...To do justice, love, kindness and walk humbly with your God”.*  
- Micah 6:8







### Integral Development

In 1995, Rev. Fr. Joseph Benedict Devarajah who had been very closely associated with SEDEC in the rehabilitation work in conflict areas was appointed Director. He brought with him the idealism that had sustained that vision when he had been in charge of the formation and growth of HUDEC-Jaffna (Human Development Centre). When HUDEC commenced its work in 1970, Fr. Devarajah on a request made by the Bishop of Jaffna had started a mission in the islands where a very marginalised community of fishermen lived. He was the first indigenous priest to bring them into the mainstream of development. He began an integrated development programme for the people of Iranitivu. This programme consisted of two components and emphasised building co-operatives for fisherman and credit societies and providing at the same time, nutrition and health education.



**Rev. Fr. J. B. Devarajah**

Mechanised boats were introduced to this community which had earlier eked out an existence by 'set-net' fishing. A beche-de-mer industry too was also started to help the people. Fr. Devarajah obtained guidance in animating and mobilising these marginalised people from Fr. Joe Fernando and he notes with pride that one of

the young graduates who helped him in these initial stages was the Government Agent of Killinochchi. In 1977 Fr. Devarajah took over the rehabilitation of the refugees and displaced persons. It was during this time CRONE (Catholic Relief Organisation for North and East) came into operation to facilitate the movement of funds for the rehabilitation of refugees.

In 1982, the Diocese of Jaffna was divided and a new diocese, that of Mannar, came into existence. Fr. Devarajah was placed in charge of the Madhu Church in the Mannar Diocese. During this period he started a SEDEC Diocesan Centre named Valvuthayam in Mannar (the dawn of a new life). This Centre was concerned with the setting up of new settlements for those who were displaced by the ethnic conflict. In addition, emphasis was laid on setting up cooperatives for fishermen. In 1989, Mannar had 23 Fisheries Co-operative Unions and in recognition of his services, Fr. Devarajah, was appointed to the Fisheries Board.



**Fr. Devarajah with Mr. Jehan Perera (on to the right)**



Fr. Deverajah was also concerned with the development of agriculture for youth and provided animation for agricultural units to set-up subsidiary food crop plantations and, through the means of agricultural co-operatives, to obtain farming equipment. Fr. Deverajah brought to SEDEC his expertise in concepts of the integral development of man based on the teachings of the papal encyclicals. He also brought his concern and commitment regarding the rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons. "Development is a necessary component for peace," says Fr. Deverajah and it was within that framework that he guided the National Centre - SEDEC into the third millennium.



**Mr. Newton Fernando  
(on to the left)**

The appointment of Mr. Newton Fernando as Administrative Manager was designed to provide a more systemised administrative setup which could ensure the smooth functioning in all these areas. Mr. Newton Fernando's experience as Associate Director at Marga Institute and his deep commitment in the lay apostolate, was believed would give SEDEC the necessary dynamism.

SEDEC, while yet continuing its earlier programmes, was heavily involved in relief and rehabilitation, which, due to the ongoing conflict, had taken on a permanency and was no longer regarded as Emergency Relief. In this area, SEDEC co-ordinated much of

the programme funding sent by agencies and in the prevailing difficult situation, attempted to provide conditions to improve the problems faced by the large number of displaced persons, both in the North and East. Understanding the situation deeply, SEDEC was also actively involved in promoting people-oriented peace initiatives to create an understanding of the actual conditions in these areas. SEDEC attempted to create an inter-religious link so as to build a climate of friendship whereby the existing polarization that prevailed between the south and the north would get minimised. In addition to these concerns of peace, SEDEC also continued reaching out to the Diocesan Centres providing animation, evaluation when necessary and forwarding projects to funding agencies for diocesan programmes.

Under the Chairmanship of the then Bishop, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Malcolm Ranjith, Fr. Deverajah and with Mr. Newton Fernando as Administrative Manager, SEDEC was not only extending documentation and research services but also conducting animation programmes for diocesan coordinators and leaders so that from the National Centre, a sound foundation would be provided on the social doctrines of the Church and the manner by which these doctrines could be put into effect.

*"And this Caritas is not a mere organization, as other philanthropic organizations, but a necessary expression of the profound act of personal love with God who has created us, awakening in our hearts the thrust to love, reflection of God's Love, that his image makes us."*

- Pope Benedict XVI



### SEDEC a Witness to Christ by Example

SEDEC entered the Third Millennium with a vision to create the reality defined by the papal encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. In 1995, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Malcolm Ranjith was appointed as the Chairman. In his inaugural address to the staff, the new director (later to become Cardinal), emphasised the spiritual content of Social action. "When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present we are not just promoting human well-being, we are also furthering man's spiritual and moral development. Working at SEDEC or with the Commission is not merely a job, it is a vocation, a deeply spiritual and Christian one. We should always keep that in mind. SEDEC is not a funding agency or merely an NGO as the popular press calls such organisations. Those working in SEDEC should remember there is a spiritual service that seeks to animate and be a witness to Christ more by example than by words, plans and projects," His Lordship said. He noted that SEDEC should plan with diocesan counterparts, diocesan deaneries and parishes and campaign to train community leaders capable of animating others in their areas and forming a social consciousness according to the Christian perspective.



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Malcolm Ranjith**

His Lordship Malcolm Ranjith had emphasised the role of the National Centre-SEDEC in the peace process. He concentrated

in creating a consensus of opinion with regard to the fact that peace should be through a negotiated settlement which will bring justice to all sectors of the community. The organisation of a Religious Alliance consisting of dignitaries of the Buddhist Sangha, representing the different Nikayas and representatives of the Christian Churches could be regarded as a positive step in this search for peace. The recent visit of this Alliance to the Vanni which was co-ordinated by His Lordship and discussions the Alliance had thereafter with the then President Chandrika Kumaratunga, appeared to have created a better atmosphere of understanding and developed a pragmatic approach to solving the ethnic conflict. Meanwhile, the new millennium also brought in further changes.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Vianney Fernando took over from His Lordship Malcolm Ranjith as the Chairman of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Human



Development. He, with his earlier experience as the National Director and being aware of SEDEC's importance as an instrument to bring the reality of the Church's social teaching to society, encouraged and assisted in its programmes, especially those of building understanding among communities.





## **Human Dignity should be Realized and a Just Society Established**



**Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando**

Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando took over from Fr. Devarajah in September 3, 2001. He brought with him the vision of making SEDEC the instrument of the integral development of persons where men could live in a just society with dignity. "When we have this vision we have to take into consideration the context in which we live. Human dignity is not a mere conceptualization of an idea, it has to be realised and we at SEDEC have to use the Social Doctrine of the Church to give meaning and reality to that concept. People must be animated so that they will become participants in development." That was the motive of Fr. Damian, the new National Director.

Fr. Damian brought with him the experience he had gained in Galle and thereafter at Ratnapura. But even he took the reign of office into his hands here in Colombo, a major flood engulfed the Ratnapura and Galle districts and SEDEC was in the forefront arranging emergency disaster assistance. This enabled Fr. Damain to obtain a working knowledge of the strength and skills of the staff of the National Centre in rising to situations that called for

immediate coordination and planning. Once this crisis period was settled, Fr. Damian commenced a programme to strengthen the network so that all the Diocesan Centres could move forward in a coordinated fashion. This unity of purpose would provide greater efficiency in responding to the various situations in the country.



**Mr. Newman Fernando  
(on to the right)**

Furthermore, in order to efficiently put into operation his plan for structural cohesion, he appointed Mr. Newman Fernando in March 2005, firstly as an administrative manager and thereafter designated him as the Senior Executive Manager during the same year, with provision to act as deputy to the Executive Director. Newman Fernando's previous experience working in the Ceylinco Group and his deep commitment to the lay apostolate, gave Caritas Sri Lanka (CSL), the necessary direction and dynamism it needed to carry on with its programmes in an efficient and effective manner.

Peace initiatives too were another priority in Fr. Damian's vision for SEDEC and this meant furthering the rapport with religious leaders that his Lordship Malcolm Ranjith had initiated and furthering the North-South Dialogue.





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Fr. Damian was also instrumental in bringing about a change and giving the identity of SEDEC its international significance. This was very necessary in view of the tsunami disaster that occurred in 2004 December, devastating the lives and property of thousands of people in Sri Lanka. As donors from the world over extended their hand of friendship and assistance to re-create the lives of those who had lost not only their loved ones but also their livelihood, SEDEC associating with the larger international community of Caritas Internationalis, took on the name Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC in order to establish its link and vision with Caritas.

Further, Fr. Damian had to coordinate the work of all those who offered their services especially those of foreign agencies and work out the logistics and the strategies to provide for them the facilities they needed and assist them in their programmes. This required a great deal of managerial and financial skills and it also led to Fr. Damian deciding that it was necessary to further develop and strengthen the internal managerial levels of CSL-SEDEC. Bringing in the expertise of his own administrative skills and the experience developed under His Lordship Malcolm Ranjith, as Procurator Ratnapura Diocese, Fr. Damian began a process of strengthening the Board of Directors which consisted of all the directors of the Diocesan Centres.

He provided them with various inputs for capacity building and widen their knowledge with orientation programmes designed to further their developmental procedures, monitoring and evaluation methods and emphasised that the people should

be empowered to find their own solutions. His belief is that if procedures and systems are incorporated into all diocesan structures then continuity will exist.

In pursuit of this concept, he also established close links with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL), so that Caritas Sri Lanka would reflect the thinking of the hierarchy on social justice issues. Fr. Damian was determined to set a strong foundation for SEDEC to pursue its objectives of making the social justice vision of the Church a reality so that peace and equality of opportunity will be established in society.



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Peiris**

In 2004, once more His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Pieris was chosen by the CBCSL as Chairman of the Commission for Justice Peace and Human Development. With his previous experience as Chairman, he brought

to SEDEC, once more his vision that it should be a living reality in disseminating by action the concepts of the social teachings of the Church. The major floods in the Ratnapura district in 2004 had devastated the whole area. Being a landside prone district, dislocation of families occurred and the incessant rain made many roads and areas inaccessible. Bishop Raymond was justified in his thinking that the social teachings of the Church should

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be made visible by the action of Caritas since all the Diocesan Centres in unaffected areas too united in providing flood relief to the affected people. SEDEC took the leadership on this issue and developed a smooth coordinating strategy which led to all centres working as a cohesive universal body.

In a speech His Lordship Raymond Pieris said, "This cohesive action programme came in very useful when the greater tragedy of the tsunami devastation affected the country. When the tsunami occurred people organized themselves, obtained local collections and went to the affected places. Everyone who was associated with the relief process and it showed that whatever a person's religion, was, in a crisis situation the inner unity and compassion of people were evident. Perhaps in a sense, in the earlier instance when the Diocesan Centres had joined in the flood relief programme, it had, in a certain way, brought greater awareness to community that compassion and inherent unity taught by the major religions and evident in the vision of CSL, could be practiced by all."

The International Caritas family joined to assist CSL at this point under the guidance of the Tsunami Task Force, the policy making body of tsunami programmes of Caritas Sri Lanka. The Tsunami Task Force consisted of Their Lordships, Raymond Peries, Harold Anthony and Kingsley Swampillai. It also comprised Justice Mark Fernando, Gamini Wijesinghe, Joe Muthupulle, Shirley Wijesinghe, Fr. Damian Fernando and Mr. Thievendirarajah from the National Centre. The representatives from Secours Catholique, the facilitating partners, were Mr. Aloysious John and Mr. Arockiam Vedomutthu.

The role of the facilitating partner was evident especially during the tsunami operations. They provided SEDEC with human resources and periodical consultations which enhanced the quality of the programmes. Besides this, other Caritas Partners also played a sub facilitating role by accompanying each respective Diocese, with their own advisors.

The concept of the facilitating Partner's role was introduced by Caritas Internationalis and it was given the clear mandate of 'Accompaniment in Partnership'. Facilitating Partners are involved in capacity building and providing skills and identifying, designing and planning appropriate programmes through a reflective process. They also coordinate and cooperate with other partners in Europe and represent Caritas Sri Lanka at different fora.

It was during Fr. Damian Fernando's time that the Asia Partnership for Human Development (APHD) concluded its operations with Caritas Sri Lanka and other members in March 2008. APHD as a forum in Asia has mainly focused on 'Sustainable Development' in all the sectors and countries. APHD also focused attention on capacity building and women's development, including anti trafficking on a Pan Asia Level. Caritas Sri Lanka has been a hosting partner and had organized many of the General Assemblies and other related conferences of APHD in the past years. It also built up a strong network among the members of APHD in Asia.

Caritas Asia who had been supporting CSL and 22 Caritas countries by way of capacity building in disaster response and preparedness and institutional building, now continued the



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

programmes initiated by APHD in the Asian region. Most Rev. Yvon Ambroise, Bishop of Tutocorin, was the coordinator of Caritas Asia in 2001. During his tenure, Bishop Yvon initiated frequent visits to young Caritas institutions including Caritas Sri Lanka to help and support their interventions. He was also instrumental in further strengthening the concept of animation, conducting seminars and in-house training programmes for National and the Diocesan staff members in Sri Lanka. He was appointed Regional President for Caritas Asia at the 18th General Assembly of Caritas in 2007. With his support and encouragement Caritas Sri Lanka was able to strengthen the National Animation Programme.

In 2007, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Harold Anthony Perera was appointed as the Chairman of the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka. His Lordship brought into SEDEC his vibrant dynamism with his experience working in two dioceses, first at Ratnapura and then in Galle. He had first-hand knowledge of working in environments which had an overwhelming population of non-Christians and, yet among them, he had succeeded in creating an awareness of Gospel teachings. Hence, the presence of His Lordship as Chairman of SEDEC was a fitting way of bringing into its working the conceptualization of the totality of the social doctrine of the Church in atmospheres which are often suspicious and wary of Christian views. His Lordship's healthy rapport with the non-Christian clergy was very helpful in this process.

When Bishop Harold took over the Chairmanship in 2007, SEDEC was totally involved in the tsunami rehabilitation work. Caritas Internationalis too was prominently involved in this endeavour and a great deal of coordination and planning strategies were necessary to make optimum use of the assistance received and offered.

Meanwhile, escalation of the conflict in the North was another problem that was creating further disharmony, fear and suspicion. In the early years of his chairmanship Bishop Harold undertook to visit the conflict-affected areas in the North, East and Mannar to meet the people and later speak to the authorities on behalf of them. He also met those in authority including the President, Mahinda Rajapaksa in order to present the needs and suffering of those in the affected areas. To further his peace programme, inter-religious dialogue was essential, since southern views were mainly formed on the thinking of the Buddhist clergy.



**National Movement for Justice, Peace & Reconciliation**

His Lordship was very successful in establishing such contact and also meeting leaders of other political parties, in order to develop a further understanding.

In fact he was able to persuade them to understand that the Church's concern was peace and justice and that the Church leaders in the North and East stood for the unitary nature of the country.

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





While rehabilitation of tsunami victims was a priority, His Lordship was highly concerned about the human rights violations that were taking place. “We will work according to Gospel values. The



**SEDEC Tsunami Housing Programme**

challenge to Christianity is to work in keeping with the Sermon on the Mount. We are not a charitable organization. We are concerned with the total development of man. We are trying to empower people to stand on their own feet and build a just society where all people can live happily.” His Lordship made use of the Caritas Internationalis network of almost 162 countries in 202 regions and territories to reach out to the greater community and obtain from them not only intellectual resources but also their specific expertise. The experience received from the international community for the tsunami rehabilitation showed the importance of establishing links with other Church agencies.

Bishop Harold was of the view that guided by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference, SEDEC has a very important role to play in creating the atmosphere for a just society where all citizens have equal rights and opportunities. “We are all citizens of this country and we must work towards the goal of building, a Just Society in our nation,” His Lordship emphasised.

The history of SEDEC will be incomplete without the mention of Mr. Theivendirarajah, popularly called Theiva. He constitutes the livewire in almost all activities and programmes initiated. Theiva

joined SEDEC in 1980 as part of the immediate relief service programme under the guidance of Fr. Joe Fernando. He emulated the ideals expounded by Fr. Joe Fernando who had met him when he volunteered to help victims during the 1978 cyclone.



**Mr. K. Theivendirarajah**

Theiva has brought to SEDEC his commitment and dedication to every aspect of work he has been involved in before he was appointed Tsunami Programme Manager.

He worked in the Training and Animation Unit. He was also the head of the Relief and Rehabilitation Unit and National Coordinator of the Peace Programme. His efficiency in carrying out the work as Tsunami Programme Manager was in no way due to the experience in post disaster preparedness, his familiarity with the church’s structural procedures and Caritas Internationalis. He is a member of the Caritas International Cooperation Committee for Asia and a reference group member of the strategic plan of Caritas Internationalis during the last General Assembly.

Mr. Theivendirarajah believes that the challenge of the tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction programme is to convert it to a development programme. He represents the idealism, vision and commitment that identifies him with the social justice teachings of the Church.

SEDEC today is viable and dynamic due to the vision and influence of each of its Directors. In carrying out the directives of



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

the Commission for Peace and Justice, each Director gave his own interpretation as to the priority and strategy SEDEC should follow. From an organization that started in a little room with a staff of three, today SEDEC has become an organization that has established successfully a system of networking, both with Government and Non-Governmental organizations.

Further, it has established the decentralization so necessary for an organization to grow. The Centre operated and developed its own concerns, but remained the coordinating and feeder centre for the diocesan units. It also provided for the continuity of these Units, while allowing the Diocesan Centers to decide since the Diocesan Directors know best their own situations. The National Centre - SEDEC operates on a flexible policy of guidance and animation providing diocesan leaders with inputs, training and orientation programmes. Administratively too, SEDEC has shifted from the system of a Board of Governors and the earlier method of nomination of layperson to the Board, to an Administrative Board consisting of all diocesan directors and a lay representative from each diocese. However, when needed, both the National and the Diocesan Centres obtain technical expertise, especially for programme planning and evaluation.

The Director of the National Centre - SEDEC is a nominee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka and operates under the aegis of the specific Bishop who heads the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development. The first Bishop-in-Charge of SEDEC was His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Leo Nanayakkara. He brought to the infant SEDEC his vision of the dignity of the human person and the aspirations of the workers. Though SEDEC did not get directly involved in the issues of that time since it was too early for it to do so, the concept was interwoven onto the vision of SEDEC and later as it became more

viable and dynamic, it concerned itself directly with such issues. But gradually dioceses took up their own causes and the National Centre - SEDEC co-ordinated and assisted them. Unfortunately this co-ordination often stopped short of direct participation on such issues by Diocesan Centres, however, under the leadership of Fr. Damian, a greater unity of purpose has been achieved. *The Church calls for a constant revision of all systems according to the criteria of the dignity of the human person. John Paul II states, "The Social Doctrine of the Church offers orientation and inspiration for the temporal commitment of Catholics, but much is left to their creativity and their free choices in front of alternate policies equally acceptable from a moral point of view."*



The vision of Caritas Sri Lanka, as exemplified by its Directors from the very inception flowed down to the Diocesan Centres which in keeping with their own priorities worked out their strategies in programming and especially in animation. However, all these activities had a common chain linking their thoughts for all were based on the integral development of the human person. However, each centre, while basing its vision on this central theme, worked out its own logistics in dealing with the challenges that differed from centre to centre. One finds that, within the multi religious perspective of the country and the small percentage of Christians, most Diocesan Centres had to concentrate on finding an entry point into the community. Taking in the traditional concepts regarding education, animating groups found, in most dioceses, that the pre-school was a way by which mobilisation of the community could take place.

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





## Achieving Peace and Human Dignity 2008-2018

The year 2008 was a time when Sri Lanka was at the peak of its Civil War. The escalating crisis directly affected more than 800,000 people in the North. The intervention of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC in directly assisting the victims of the ongoing war also focused much attention on the priorities and strategies to guide the Diocesan Centres. With the end of the war in 2009, SEDEC recommenced its humanitarian activities.

There were two different post-war scenarios here, with two camps housing a large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), and the other, in a more restricted environment where 18 Catholic priests and 120 Hindu priests were held captive. Through continued advocacy, SEDEC was able to arrange a visit to the IDP camps, with a delegation comprising members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and two Buddhist prelates who were able to wield influence. As an outcome of this visit, SEDEC skillfully steered the release of the priests after signing an agreement with the government authorities.

In 2009, a Presidential Task Force (PTF) was set up for Resettlement,

Development and Security in the Northern Province with Mr. Basil Rajapaksa as Chairman. A decision was taken to relocate the IDPs housed in Manik Farm and 4,900 IDPs were resettled



at Adampan in the Vavuniya district. SEDEC was now focusing more and more attention on psychosocial aspects and children's education while continuing its assistance to the five Dioceses which were affected by the tsunami. Under the Caritas' Tsunami Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme 10,713 permanent houses as well as 12,616 temporary and transitional shelters

were built. With the support of Caritas Poland, a programme to award 3,000 scholarships to children who were orphaned or semi-orphaned during the tsunami was begun. However, since no support was rendered under this programme to the other Dioceses, SEDEC negotiated with Caritas Poland to offer a small portion of the scholarships to non-tsunami Dioceses.

Meanwhile, the 'National Peace Programme' started in 1999, had to undergo a name change, mainly to overcome the informal restrictions imposed by various elements in authority. Thus the





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

peace programme was given a new title, Social Justice and Sustainable Peace Programme. Since some of the terminology used such as 'peace' and 'counselling' were sensitive, SEDEC changed its approach to 'respecting human dignity' and used the teachings of different religions to take the message of peace, especially to the schools and Sunday schools island wide. Under this initiative a total of 650 teachers from schools and Sunday schools were trained.



**Members of CBCSL visiting North**

strategic plan prepared in 2002/2003.

In the intervening period a change was also taking place in the administration of SEDEC with Rev. Fr. Damien Fernando who had directed the National Centre handing over responsibility to the new director, Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney of the Kandy Diocese. Fr. Sigamoney officially took over as Director of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC in early 2010. Fr. Sigamoney who was Director, Caritas Kandy-SETIC, had harnessed ample skills and vision with his experience in serving the communities in the hill-country, especially those in the plantation sector.



**Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney**

A new dimension was now given to the National Animation Programme (NAP) started in 1999, where livelihood support was given to the poor and marginalised communities. However, SEDEC through the support of some funding partners shifted its strategy from a 'needs-based approach' to a rights-based approach, thereby gearing the animation programme towards community empowerment. A significant role was played by Bishop Yvon Ambroise who took the responsibility of training Caritas Sri Lanka staff in building their internal capacity to develop overall capacity enhancement. The meetings of the Sri Lanka Working Group held in 2010, 2012 and 2013, which brought together the funding partners of SEDEC, also discussed how best they could support the programmes of SEDEC and provide the necessary direction and guidance.

One major drawbacks faced by SEDEC was when Sri Lanka achieved the middle-income economic status, which led to Sri Lanka not being placed in the priority list of the donors whereby most of them directed their attention to other low income African and South American countries. However, SEDEC was successful in obtaining State funds through Caritas partners from the Governments of Norway, Germany and Australia for its programmes.

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



Upon completion of the NAP, through consultation and agreement, all stakeholders decided to use the tsunami interest funds for the welfare of the marginalised communities. Thus, SEDEC designed the Integral Human Development through the Community Empowerment (IHDTCE) programme for 2010-2013, based on the priorities and objectives of the Strategic Plan covering all 13 Caritas Dioceses. After mobilising the grass-root level poor and marginalised communities, Caritas was instrumental in forming community institutions to take ownership and empowered them to work towards their self-development. At the completion of the IHDTCE programme in March 2014, there were 1,336 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and 162 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) all over the island.

From the experience and learning gained from the IHDTCE programme in 2013, Caritas launched several sector-wise programmes including the Food Security Programme supported by Caritas Norway for farming communities and another programme was implemented to gain rights for the plantation workers funded by MISEREOR Germany. This programme is titled 'Empowerment of the Green Gold Harvesters' (GGH). Initially SEDEC faced strong resistance from the plantation management who did not allow any outsiders to enter the plantations. Instead of fighting for the rights of the



**Grassroot level community meeting (SHG)**

workers, SEDEC devised an approach by encouraging workers to form vigilant groups to look into their own issues and also organize activities to improve the living conditions in the estates.



**SEDEC safeguarding the rights of Plantation Communities**

In the meantime, respective Diocesan Directors convinced the plantation management to change their attitudes towards the Green Gold Harvesters' Programme. The Directors explained that when the workers solve their own issues and are happy, there would be less complaints and absenteeism. In addition, the production improves and the plantation estates will gain from this situation. After identifying some of the long standing problems of the plantation communities, SEDEC developed a Position Paper on The Social Concerns of the Catholic Church for the Plantation Community in Sri Lanka, to advocate for their rights. This was approved and signed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka and has been shared with the Prime Minister's Office.

Eight members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka, Fr. George Sigamoney visited South Africa. Their intention was to



**Making submissions to the LLRC Committee**



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

study the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa, its achievements, impacts and challenges with a view to establishing a commission within the Christian community in line with the TRC. This way the Church would be in a better position to coordinate and conduct peace and reconciliation activities in Sri Lanka.

Another unfortunate situation was building up in the period from 2012-2014. This was the time when people were expecting the dawn of peace after the war, but due to the actions of certain religious extremists, religious tension emerged in the country, which was backed by the short-sighted politicians. This situation showed signs of another emerging conflict between the different ethnic and religious communities. Immediate action was taken by SEDEC to create a conducive environment for religious amity and to establish healing and reconciliation among the different communities in line with the Recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), established by the then government in 2011. SEDEC has been successful in establishing 65 Inter Religious Forums (IRF), and 40 Peace Committees in all nine Provinces of Sri Lanka and is working to diminish the hatred, suspicions, misunderstandings and misconceptions of both religious and ethnic communities.



**Capacity Building workshop on Anti Human Trafficking**

Since the subject of migration and human trafficking was becoming a priority at the highest level, considerable attention was been given by Caritas Internationalis to the issue. Thus in 2010, SEDEC Director, Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney decided to establish a migrations desk at the National Centre. It was also found that many Sri Lanka women domestic migrant workers faced immense difficulties such as rape, sexual assault, non-payment of wages, harassment and even death, in the destination countries, despite the fact that the remittances send by them was the topmost foreign income earner for the country. The major cause for Sri Lankan labour migration was poverty. However, one factor that contributed to the problems faced by the migrant workers was that the employment contract was in Arabic.

The SEDEC Migration Programme with strong advocacy collecting 10,000 signatures, requested the Government to translate the contract documents into Sinhala and Tamil. This helped prevent some of the problems and enabling the potential migrant workers use proper legal channels to seek employment abroad. Presently, the SEDEC led 'Safe Migration Programme' which has joined hands with many regional partners is been implemented. The programme covers the entire island.



The Relief and Rehabilitation (R&R) unit at Caritas Sri Lanka-

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





SEDEC (with the task of responding to disaster situations), taking into consideration the Global Reflection on Disasters done at Caritas Internationalis level, changed its name and strategy to Disaster Risk Management (DRM). Many activities have been introduced on disaster preparedness and building community resilience. The national DRM Unit known as Disaster Management Centre, works closely with Caritas Diocesan partners to give immediate relief in times of natural disasters, like flash floods, drought as well as landslides, which have become more frequent in recent years. SEDEC also built houses for landslide affected families in Aranayaka in 2016.



**Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Welivita**

Meanwhile, Caritas Sri Lanka geared fresh initiatives in drafting policies in 2016, adhering to global standards and Caritas Internationalis (CI) management standards. SEDEC started introducing policies on transparency, accountability and finance according to CI management standards under the direction of Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Welivita who was appointed as National Director in 2016. Fr. Welivita initiated the consultations that enabled the formulation of the present Strategic Plan 2018-2021 of Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC.

In 2017, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke was appointed as the National Director of SEDEC. His approach, strategy and vision envisaged to expand the present contours of Caritas Sri Lanka

and to develop a strong network of partnerships with other like-minded and faith-based organizations. Thus, relations have been established with high ranking government institutions, Religious Councils, private companies and other NGOs etc., apart from the routine work.



**Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke**

Fr. Mahendra has aligned the work of SEDEC with the Papal Encyclicals and Catholic Social Teachings. 'Volunteerism' is another aspect that Fr. Mahendra, has been able to encourage through which SEDEC was able to introduce many programmes such as the 'Solid Waste Management' and 'Mega Beach Clean-up' programmes which saw the presence and participation of a large number of volunteers in cleaning the coastlines in 2018.



**Participants in a March on Peace & Reconciliation**



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

*"In the past year, many of our brothers and sisters have continued to endure the destructive experience of war, which constitutes a grave and deep wound inflicted on fraternity. Many conflicts are taking place amid general indifference. To all those who live in lands where weapons impose terror and destruction, I assure you of my personal closeness and that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring Christ's love to the defenceless victims of forgotten wars through her prayers for peace, her service to the wounded, the starving, refugees, the displaced and all those who live in fear. The Church also speaks out in order to make leaders hear the cry of pain of the suffering and to put an end to every form of hostility, abuse and the violation of fundamental human rights."*

- Pope Francis



**Beach Clean up Programme 2018**



**All Island Debate Competition 2018**

**Mr. Koji Takakura**  
visiting SEDEC  
(the inventor of  
Takakura Composting  
Methodology)



**Orientation on Right To Information Act**

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**



## Staff of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC



**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Anuradhapura - Sethsaviya**

Caritas 'Sethsaviya' in Anuradhapura was started in 1998, under the auspices of Rev. Fr. Benedict Perera, who was its first director. The main concentration of 'Sethsaviya' was on animation, training programmes and mobilising community leaders so as to establish thrift and credit societies. This would be of great use in the Anuradhapura District which has a large number of settlements or colonization schemes. The colonists found it difficult to obtain bank loans and were highly dependent on money lenders. Since agriculture was given priority in the area, Rev Fr. Gilbert Perera who was appointed Director of Sethsaviya in 1999 concentrated much on mobilising community leadership to decide on the needs of the community with reference to the availability of water and a market for crops. Rev. Fr. Gilbert Perera was successful in establishing a good rapport with the Buddhist majority who lived in the area. This helped immensely in expanding the work of 'Sethsaviya'.



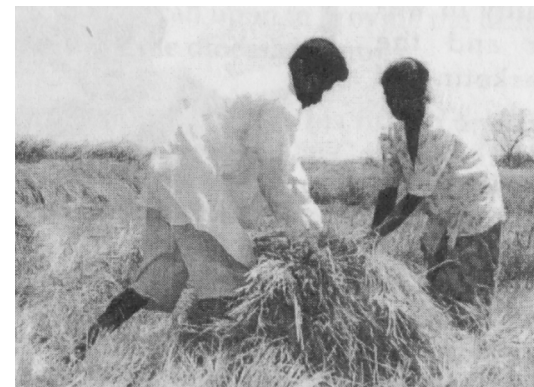
**Rev. Fr. Paaris Jayamaha**

'Sethsaviya' commenced a programme to animate and mobilise leadership in the border villages. It was expected that through the programme, the marginalised villages would be able to develop community programmes for their own benefit.

Rev. Fr. Paaris Jayamaha who was entrusted the responsibility as

Director in 2006, was able to get the help of Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC and also get the assistance from the EU and other Caritas related funding agencies.

With this assistance he succeeded in establishing a programme to supply drinking water and basic sanitation facilities. He was also successful in receiving assistance



to develop livelihood, skills and provide self employment for over 250 families. Anuradhapura is one of the most marginalised districts in the country and Rev. Fr. Paaris Jayamaha was anxious to provide facilities needed for the betterment of the people.

### **2008-2018**

Anuradhapura commonly referred to as Rajarata is considered as central to ancient Sri Lankan history and is the first capital of ancient Sri Lanka. The area is inclusive of the whole of the North Central Province and consists of both Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Measuring approximately 10,535 km, the vast land area has a population of 1.4 million people, but is not fully developed since population is concentrated in the highly rural areas. People faced various hardships in travelling about until

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



ethnic war ended for fear of being attacked by the LTTE. Due to the uncertainty of the situation in the region, many did not wish to establish permanent abodes instead they operated from temporary residences. In addition, the people faced innumerable problems, as the weather conditions often fluctuated from intense heat at times where the land got parched and cracked due to the drought and the torrential rain which destroyed their agriculture.

Often the farmers engaged in chena cultivation of paddy and vegetables had to bear the direct consequences of the war. Moreover, due to the heavy usage of imported fertilizer, many cultivators were subject to kidney ailments. The youth too faced problems like unemployment, lack of sustained education and other related social problems.

Caritas Anuradhapura-Sethsaviya celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, having served the people since 1998. 'Sethsaviya' was established on September 1, 1998, under the guidance of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis, then Bishop of the diocese. The Centre was based at the Church of Our Lady of Good Health with Rev. Fr. Benedict Perera as the first director and who provided the initial needs for establishing the Centre. Thereafter, Rev. Fr. Gilbert Perera took over the challenge of creating awareness and also strengthening the core membership. It was a difficult task to persuade the people to use their own available resources to develop their lives, after having been used to receiving State hand-outs for their existence.

According to the writer of the text of Rajarata, the Second

Vatican Council had concentrated its missionary services as an endeavour to save souls. However, in the post Council period, it had changed its definition and takes as its guideline the 'complete liberation of man'. Accordingly, the Church intervenes as best as possible not only to participate in religious rites but also to obtain the basic necessities for man to sort out his life.

Rev. Fr. Gilbert Perera played the role of a catalyst by taking 'Sethsaviya' to the remote areas of the Diocese. He was succeeded by Rev Fr. Paaris Jayamaha, who after six years of service, in 2016 handed over the administration of 'Sethsaviya' to Rev Fr. Sri Lal Fernando, who harnessed many foreign funding agencies to provide the much needed counseling for the border villagers. In 2018, Rev. Fr. Bennette Mellawa was appointed as the Director.

At the helm of Caritas Anuradhapura-Sethsaviya is His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Norbert Andradi OMI, Bishop of Anuradhapura who closely observes the workings of the institution giving the necessary guidance and leadership as it as Chairman.

*"Rajarata, the land of tanks, nourished by core values of religions yearns for a prosperous society enriched by its resources. In order to realize this dream, Sethsaviya proceeds along the path of its mission. We of Sethsaviya are committed to strengthen the people of North Central Province (NCP) who have been suppressed and impoverished due to deprivation of their rights. These people are formed into CBOs and empowered to stand for their rights with the support of the local leaders of the temple, the church, the mosque and the kovil. A great number of programmes have been implemented during the past 20 years to empower the people who live in Rajarata".*



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

For the last 20 years the animation strategy was the basis of all the projects implemented by 'Sethsaviya'.

As of now, there are 205

small groups, 28 CBOs formed by amalgamating a few small groups together which belong to 2087 families. Needless to say they are a great source of strength to 'Sethsaviya' and nearly Rs. 12,285,000 has been saved in their societies and groups. Relief and Rehabilitation Programmes were implemented to help the poor of Rajarata, who have been subjected to both man-made and natural disasters. The aim of the programme was to enhance their economic activities and to build resilience, mental well-being leading to sustainable living conditions. A Child Protection Programme was implemented according to the Child Care Charter made by SEDEC for the well-being of children. The programme was implemented in collaboration with selected schools in the North Central Province, Sunday Schools, religious intuitions and child care officials of the State.

Under the Caritas Poland Scholarship Programme, a group of 1200 children in the North Central Province were helped to pursue their studies. 'Sethsaviya' with financial aid from Caritas Norway



**Commemorating World Food Day 2017**

motivates the people of Rajarata to engage in organic agriculture, as a remedial measure to the chronic kidney disease prevalent here. A Drinking Water Programme was initiated by 'Sethsaviya' with the funding support of CAFOD to build 25 drinking water wells.



Parallel to this project 'Sethsaviya' with the financial assistance of Deutsche Bank constructed water tanks in seven villages. Technical assistance was supplied by the Water Supply Board. After the end of the war, two peace programmes were initiated and implemented in seven villages affiliated to 'Sethsaviya'. A housing programme with financial assistance from Secours Catholique in France and Caritas Switzerland was also implemented.

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'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'



## Staff of Caritas Anuradhapura - Sethsaviya



**GOLDEN JUBILEE** of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Badulla - USCOD**

*H*is Lordship, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Leo Nanayakkara OSB, the first Bishop of Badulla, was the architect of the Uva Socio-Economic and Community Development Centre, (USCOD-Badulla) and the Bishop Leo Technical Institute, which was established in 1975. USCOD is the social arm of the Diocese of Badulla and is identified as the executive arm of the Justice Peace and Human Development Commission of the Diocese. It functions under the Chairmanship of the Bishop of Badulla, who appoints a Director for a period of five years. The Director is responsible for the staff and the management of the Centre. The first Director of USCOD Centre was Rev. Fr. Guy de Fontgalland and it was during the long period of his tenure that the guidelines for USCOD Centre programmes were developed. In 1983 all the programmes came to a standstill when the building was reduced to ashes as a result of the ethnic conflict.

Rev. Fr. Leo Federick who was appointed in 1984 did not serve for very long but was able to provide the basic training to youth. He was succeeded in 1985 by the late Rev. Fr. A. E. Rajapakse; however, his period of service was extremely short. The late Bishop Edmund J. Fernando who was chosen as the Chief Shepherd of Badulla Diocese in January 1986, with a profound love for the poor and needy, was inspired to appoint Rev. Fr. Derrick Mendis, S.J. who shared the same ideology, as Director of Caritas Badulla - USCOD.

Rev. Fr. Derrick Mendis, a priest with a clearly articulated vision and an ability to influence and lead, in a very short period, won the hearts and confidence of all communities, made significant

headway and succeeded in re-establishing the Centre. He, with the support and encouragement of the late Bishop Edmund J. Fernando, was motivated to provide and expand training facilities for the underprivileged youth and the animation programme, mobilizing small groups to make possible entry into the communities that were still skeptical and fearful after the ethnic riots. Together, they initiated the pre-school programme, and today there are 55 pre-schools in the plantation and village areas.



**Religious Amity programme**

In 1991 Rev. Fr. Priyalal Cooray, a priest with dynamic enthusiasm, was appointed Director. His commitment to serve and co-operate with local organizations and the different communities, helped him to take a significant step forward to empower the under-privileged, transform lives and also rebuild USCOD Centre with suitable facilities for staff and students. He was succeeded in 1999 by Rev. Fr. Ignatius Senanayake, who was appointed Director by the Bishop of Badulla, Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston J. S. Fernando SSS. He, taking in the diversity of the Diocese and its multi-racial community contributed immensely to the progress of the animation and peace programmes to fit the different situations encountered in the Diocese.

St. Anthony's Technical Institute commenced as a tutoring in

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





1990, under the direction of the late Rev. Fr. A. E. Rajapakse. The building was partly completed in 1992, when he was called to eternal glory. Very little progress was made from then onwards until 1999, when St. Anthony's Technical Institute-Moneragala was established under the Directorship of Rev. Fr. Ignatius Senanayake with assistance from WUSC Sri Lanka, to renovate the building.



Rev. Fr. Dilex Shanta Fernando took over as Director in 2005. He has consolidated and strengthened the existing programmes. He spared no pain or effort to project confidence and credibility

that inspired others to share his charismatic ideals and views. He made remarkable progress steadily increasing the Programmes, vocational training courses and infrastructural facilities at USCOD and St. Anthony's Technical Institute. New extension buildings have been erected at St. Anthony's Technical Institute, which is now a fully fledged Technical Institute and rates as No.1 whilst USCOD rates No. 2 in the Badulla and Moneragala districts by the standards of the Tertiary Vocational Education Commission. He also initiated House Wiring Courses at the Prisons Moneragala and Young Offenders Rehabilitation Centre, Taldena. His untiring efforts proved fruitful in a very short period when USCOD was given the prestigious Presidential Award in 2005 as one of the best establishments promoting peace in the Uva region.

The following programmes were conducted:- Lenten Education Programme, Relief and Rehabilitation Poland Scholarship programme, Pre-school programme, Human Rights and Child Rights, Water and Sanitation. In addition vocational training courses too were conducted and these included house wiring courses, refrigeration and air conditioning radio, TV. and allied repair mechanized carpentry, plant nursery management, motor cycle and three-wheeler repair courses, etc. gas and arc welding, masonry courses and computer application course.

Today, Caritas Badulla- USCOD Centre, through the dedicated efforts of the Directors and the guidance of the Bishops move forward with a powerful vision to strongly reiterate the meaning of Caritas and build a civilization of love, where all joined to translate the social doctrines of the Church to positive actions of love, hope and peace. USCOD with the dynamism of its Directors and the Bishops guided and developed the centre into a well established and recognized organization.

### 2008-2018

*"If the 'dream' of a peaceful world is shared by all, if refugees' and migrants' contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true 'common home'."*

– Pope Francis

Uva Social Communication Centre – USCOD, Caritas Centre in the diocese of Badulla carries the vision of realization of a just Sri Lankan society based on gospel values of love, forgiveness, unity





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

and equality. Badulla consists of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Its mission is to empower people through animation programme, for justice, peace and human development. USCOD is connected to Caritas Internationalis and it derives its power through the Catholic Bishop Conference in Sri Lanka. The Chairman, Bishop of Badulla, Rt. Rev. Dr. Vincent Fernando's enthusiasm is to develop USCOD to help mainly the plantation workers self-sufficient and capable of sustaining themselves.

Majority of people living in the diocese are plantation workers who are generally are at the lowest strata of social, economic and development status in Sri Lanka due to years of deep-rooted issues.

The people living in the diocese of Badulla are working in agriculture, farming and tea plantation sector. The majority of people belong to the lower middle class income groups.

The centre is also grateful to their past directors and Rev. Fr. Sam Perera and Rev. Fr. Priyalal Cooray who had rendered their dedicated services twice as directors of USCOD.

Rev. Fr. Raveen Perera took in charge of USCOD in 2017, which now has an advisory board and the director is assisted by a dedicated staff. Fr. Raveen is also in charge of the Central Hospital Badulla.

The Centre has worked hard to restore the human dignity of the poor and the marginalized communities. Mobilization was done through capacity building and employment and income

generation opportunities. USCOD realized at the very early stage when people are empowered economically, how easy it is to promote peace and reconciliation sessions. Under these programmes estate communities were helped to overcome their economic and social barriers.

USCOD was also instrumental in creating a conducive environment for religious amity. Since the roles of religious leaders have become vital contribution to peace and reconciliation, meetings were organized on regular basis to foster peace among communities in different villages.

During the riots that took place in mid-2018, in Digana a group of five religious leaders were selected to work for peace and harmony. Press conferences were held to speak about the values of loving, kindness and patience. Sunday school children were taken to religious places of worship and exposure programmes were organized that children would be able to see the values of different religions. This has brought about an attitudinal change.

Civic dialogue and Cross-Country activities were carried out in 4 places of the diocese of Uva. During the 3 year period of the project, organic farming, protecting the environment and leadership training were given priority and people were assisted in building wells, due to the acute shortage of water in certain areas of the Uva province.

Under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Priyalal Cooray, USCOD was able to build 56 pre-school centres and 9 new buildings in rural remote areas. A team of 8 personnel was appointed to monitor the centres. 125 teachers were paid and trained by the Centre. Teachers



were selected with the help of the parish priest and awareness and nutritional programmes were carried out on regular basis for the awareness of teachers and parents. The pre-school centres were registered with the government and the teachers were awarded National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) certificates.

Training programmes too have been provided for youth after their O/L and A/L exams at Leo Technical Centre in Badulla and St. Antony's Centre in Monaragala. These courses are recognized by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission and 481 youth have been educated this programme. Youth are also given training on air conditioning and refrigerator repairs, TV and radio alignment, electrical work, computer, mechanics, carpentry, mason, sawing, welding, motorcycle and three wheel repairs. In addition, they are also given a plant nursery management. The youth who followed these courses were given certificates from the government. Youth who were unable to follow these courses due to lack of financial issues were given 500 scholarships to pursue in their desired fields.

In order to encourage women to uplift themselves from zero poverty, 'Diriyen Idiriyata' programme was initiated. 500 families were given loans to pay back by a certain period. Micro Finance and Micro Water projects were set up for a group of 15 women. Women of different ethnic groups were brought together to find solutions for their grievances. They were also provided with self-income generating opportunities under these poverty alleviation programmes.

Caritas Poland Scholarship programme was set up for single-parent families and orphans. Help was provided to families with Rs. 15,000 income a month. This was done on a monthly basis. 481 youth were educated and 2405 families were uplifted. The selection was done on a recommendation by the parish priest.

Uva province has gone through immense problems due to weather conditions. Hence, a disaster management and emergency responses were created. Due to these



**Caritas Poland Scholarship programme**

responses, basic needs of those affected by the Meeriyabedda Disaster were supported with the help of the Government Agents. Drought victims of Buttala and land slide victims of Lunugala were also helped. People affected by the fire disaster at Ridipana and landslide victims of Idalgashinna were also given assistance through Disaster Management and Emergency responses.

*"Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice towards God is called the "virtue of religion." Justice towards men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good."*

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church





**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## Staff of Caritas Badulla - USCOD



**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



## Caritas Batticaloa - EHED



EHED Trincomalee and Batticaloa, both Diocesan centers operate under the Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa. These centers, till 1983, functioned as a single Diocesan centre called EHED Trincomalee-Batticaloa which had its origins as an Apostolic youth association during the 1970's, involving itself in social activities in the Districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara.

The first Director in charge of social action was Rev. Fr. Nibert Ockerz. The cyclone of 1978, apart from the unprecedented destruction of private properties, also laid waste a number of churches and schools and the need was felt for more formalized programmes to handle the resultant issues which were, in a sense, gigantic in proportion. The need for extensive reconstruction and rehabilitation brought into operation the Social Economic Development Centre (SEDEC) Trincomalee-Batticaloa in 1980, with Rev. Fr. Anthony Leo as the Director. The name of the association was later changed, in 1981, to Eastern Human and Economic Development Centre (EHED) Trincomalee-Batticaloa.

Batticaloa had to deal with an influx of refugees from the plantation areas, who had to be relocated and provided with means of livelihood in addition to dealing with the consequences of the cyclone which had almost completely destroyed the agricultural economy. In the early instances, EHED provided immediate relief to these victims but gradually evolved programmes which would give them a sustainable livelihood. But in view of the

continuing ethnic conflict situation, it was difficult to establish any permanency by the ongoing programmes which had, at best, always been able to adjust to the ground situation caused by the different levels of the conflict.

In 1983, EHED Trincomalee-Batticaloa was transformed into two separate units EHED Batticaloa with Rev. Fr. Soyza, as its Director to cover the Districts of Ampara and Batticaloa, and in EHED Trincomalee. Rev. Fr. Anthony Leo continued to function as its Director covering the Trincomalee District. Rev. Fr. Soysa, during his period at EHED Batticaloa, continued the work concerning the refugees and those affected by the ethnic conflict in the district. EHED was involved with the setting up of an umbrella organization of all non-governmental agencies to assist refugees and destitutes who were daily increasing, including the Muslims and Sinhalese who had been displaced in Batticaloa and Ampara. In 1989, Rev. Fr. Joseph De Koning was appointed Director and he continued with programmes for animation and group leadership; however, all these activities were governed by the situation that was aggravated by partisan groups which added to the problems of the ethnic conflict.

In 1995 Fr. Clement V. Annathas took over as Director of EHED and he consolidated the work of the existing programmes and devised ways and means to provide stability to the refugees and furthered peace and inter community dialogue. In 1998, Fr. T. Sritharan Sylvester was appointed Director.



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

In EHED Trincomalee, Rev. Fr. Anthony Leo too had his work cut out due to the ethnic conflict and its impact in these areas in the eastern province. The focus was on how to provide a resemblance of normality to affected families which had been relocated often in temporary shelters. With his experience in Batticaloa, Rev. Fr. Leo initiated various programmes to help those displaced.

In 1992, Rev. Fr. Soysa took over as the Director for a spell of two years during which period he continued with the various ongoing animation and mobilizing programmes. Again in 1995 Rev. Fr. Anthony Leo was placed in charge of EHED Trincomalee and with his vast experience, he initiated various programmes to establish a continuous and sustainable livelihood for the affected. EHED Batticaloa, under the direction of Rev. Fr. T. Sritharan Sylvester, and EHED Trincomalee under Rev. Fr. Anthony Leo, operated under the difficult conditions due to the Ethnic conflict. Yet, both institutions while dealing with the specific problems caused by the refugees and uncertainties, were also concentrating on providing facilities needed by communities for development.



Tsunami Housing Scheme

The Tsunami had also affected the approach in EHED. Batticaloa, Ampara and Trincomalee Districts, and concentrated on providing viable schemes for relief and

rehabilitation as a response to the Tsunami under the direction of Diocesan Director Rev. Fr. Francis X. Dias. The centers continued with animation programmes and psychosocial trauma assistance activities to the affected victims. In addition, Human Rights awareness and action oriented programmes were conducted. Also peace, education, inter-religious and inter community organizations too were supported and encouraged at village level by EHED.

Serving the people of the Batticaloa and Ampara Districts, EHED Batticaloa from the beginnings, had been in the forefront of social welfare activities targeting the children, youth, women, students, widows and refugees due to natural and man-made disasters and also prison detainees, farmers and fishermen.



IDP camps during the war in Batticaloa

The main thrust of the institution had been the rehabilitation of a large number of persons displaced due to the ethnic disturbances and war. In later years, providing immediate relief to the victims followed up with small scale housing schemes, restoration of livelihoods etc., permanent welfare homes had been setup and continued to be maintained to accommodate school-going, parentless children and children from very poor homes. According to the felt needs of village communities facilities such as wells for drinking water and agricultural purposes had been provided.

## Education

EHED with the active corporation of the community assisted to set up pre-schools in close proximity as parents were reluctant to send their children to schools. Assistance to pre-school education, rendered also by way of construction and maintenance of pre-school buildings, allowance to volunteer teachers, provision of school equipment, training programmes and refresher workshops for the teachers, are conducted periodically.

The dearth of teachers for primary and secondary education in most of the schools, served as a hindrance in the education sector in the Districts. EHED also contributed to remedy the situation to a certain extent by paying allowances to the volunteer teachers employed at schools situated, mostly in rural areas, far away from Batticaloa town.

Scholarships, by way of monthly monetary assistance given to promising students from poor homes from the primary education to University level studies, helped the children back to academic education.

## Vocational Training

Programmes had been arranged for youths to commence small scale self-employment projects as well as to impart technical education to enable the youth to be integrated into Private and Government development projects.

## Animation

The National Animation programme unit of EHED had successfully conducting Community Mobilization programmes by forming village self-help groups and arranging programmes to motivate, train, provide leadership and create awareness in the communities. The rich experience and knowledge gained by the social animators was a very useful resource in the swift response and valuable relief programme of EHED was able to organize in the immediate aftermath of the Tsunami.



**Training workshop on Advocacy**

Savings habit among the members of the village had been successfully introduced and encouraged and financial assistance for self-employment given to promising group members.

## Assistance to Prison Detainees

Being aware of numerous instances where innocent persons are detained in prisons for unreasonably long periods, EHED worked tirelessly for justice providing legal assistance to the detainees. It also contributed substantially towards maintenance of the destitute families of the detainees.





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

### Peace Promotion

The National Peace Programme unit of EHED conducted regular programmes conveying the message of peace to the community. Awareness programmes among the youth and school children and successful exchange programmes between the Sinhala community in the South and Tamil and Muslim communities from the East were also being conducted. The awareness programmes selected the themes on peace through religious and cultural activities, confidence building, non-violent communication and conflict resolution etc.

### Trauma Alleviation

The Psychosocial Unit had made substantial contributions in alleviating the effects of trauma of the large number of adults and children affected by the Tsunami. Regular visits were made to the camps accommodating the refugees by the team of animators interacting with children and adults, arranging counseling by professionals, organizing cultural shows and sports meets etc., 'Play Activities with Children' programmes too were implemented in three camps. The visits to these families by the animators continue even after the families had been resettled in their own homes.

### Tsunami Response

Due to its long experience in the region, EHED was able to immediately look after displaced people in schools, in its own office and community halls, providing them with meals and non-food items, tents to people willing to stay in their lands,

generators, medicines and psychosocial support. This was made possible due to the whole-hearted commitment of the entire staff of EHED and its community worker-network working with grass-root community groups. EHED thereafter, proceeded to set up its Tsunami relief and rehabilitation programmes supported by Caritas worldwide network, that had seconded their own staff and experts for construction of temporary and permanent shelters, restoration of livelihoods, education and psychosocial activities.

A sub Office of EHED was opened in Kalmunai in January 2005, to be the affected people in the Kalmunai area and for effective identities implementation of the projects. The staff strength grew from 32, PT to more than 300 during the peak performance time June-December 2006.



**Nuncio Mario Zenari visiting IDP camps in Batticaloa**

EHED constructed 4,862 temporary shelters in the Batticaloa and Ampara districts. This large number was instrumental in an award being made to Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC in 2005 by the then President Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunge

Bandaranaike for the most number of Temporary shelters for Tsunami victims constructed by any NGO.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008, EHED had also reconstructed 3, 827 permanent shelters, 2 community halls, 1 school, 3 pre-schools and repaired 167 permanent shelters, and 12 schools and also

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constructed and repaired nearly thousand toilets or wells. In the development of infrastructure, EHED had constructed 7 roads, 6 culverts and provided 350 street lights. Meanwhile, the livelihood Unit performed remarkably well by forming 289 small help groups with 2236 members, EHED had given loans and grants to 1, 673 members for livelihood restoration or development, totaling nearly 25. 6 million. A very effective scheme of recovery of loan is in progress among these small help groups.



EHED Batticaloa continued with relief and rehabilitation, transitional shelter and housing, infrastructure, rehabilitation and water and sanitation programmes. It also had

in place a dynamic programme to provide sustainable livelihood by restoring assets in agriculture, fisheries and various other livelihood sectors.

## 2008-2018

The Diocese of Trincomalee and Batticaloa were separated into two dioceses in 2012, and functions under the leadership of two Bishops. The Dioceses of Batticaloa is comprised of Batticaloa and Ampara districts.

After the massive devastation which took place in the diocese during the Tsunami 2004, Caritas EHED carried out a number of programmes to uplift the people in the Batticaloa and Ampara districts. The Tsunami activities came to an end by constructing

and repairing Permanent Shelters for nearly 5432 tsunami affected families in the Batticaloa and Ampara Districts in September 2009. Livelihood units were also formed with SHGs at village level. Caritas EHED had given loans and grants to SHG members.

Fr. Cryton Outschoorn, Director of Caritas Batticaloa- EHED spearheaded all the activities during the period 2010 - 2014.



Caritas EHED completed its Tsunami activities and continued with the Rehabilitation programme for war affected and displaced communities in the Batticaloa & Ampara Districts. CAFOD -UK,

Caritas SWISS, Caritas Belgium, TROCAIRE-Ireland & Caritas Sri Lanka -SEDEC financially supported the vulnerable war affected families to lead a normal life with social security and human dignity. Caritas EHED was able to provide the following buildings and structures to help the war affected communities in the Batticaloa & Ampara Districts:

- 96 Temporary Shelters
- 414 houses
- 65 rain water harvesting water tanks
- 532 toilets
- 09 tube wells
- 11 common wells
- 02 Pre- Schools
- 01 Rice Mill
- 01 Community Centre



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

Between the year 2010 and 2013 Caritas Sri Lanka –SEDEC implemented an “Integral Human Development Programme through Community Empowerment”. Caritas EHED implemented its activities of the above Project in the Batticaloa & Ampara Districts.

### 1. Community Empowerment and Mobilization

The Purpose of this Project is to empower the community, motivate, strengthen to bring out their hidden inner abilities to identify their problems and seek solutions. In view of achieving the above mentioned objective, Caritas EHED formed 36 CBOs with 2530 members.

### 2. Social Justice and Sustainable Peace

The Peace Programme was carried out in selected GN Divisions in the two Districts. The following activities were implemented:

- Peace Education & Awareness Sessions for CBO 's members
- Celebrating Festivals & Important Commemoration Days
- Sharing of Experience among others.

### 3. Community Based Disaster Preparedness

Caritas EHED collaborated with the Disaster Management Unit of the Batticaloa & Ampara Districts and implemented activities in the disaster prone villages.

### 4. Psychosocial Support

The Psychosocial Unit made substantial contributions in alleviating the effects of trauma of a large number of adults and children affected by tsunami and the civil war.

From the year 2013 onwards Caritas Sri Lanka implemented the Food Security Project in the diocese of Batticaloa. This Project supported 2000 farmers within a period of 5 years. Each year 400 farmers were trained in sustainable organic agriculture and growing vegetables, fruits in their home gardens.

In 2015, Fr. Geron De Lima was appointed as the Director of Caritas Batticaloa- EHED and served until 2017. Fr. G. Alex Robert took over from him in 2018, and serves as the Director. Under his able leadership a number of projects are being implemented. With the aim of *“Improving the Socio – Economic standards of the poor and marginalized People living in selected rural areas of Batticaloa in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka”*, Caritas EHED Batticaloa implemented community driven activities from year 2009 up to now, with the sponsorship of Diakonia Sri Lanka. In addition, Lebara Foundation financially supports 20 pre-schools with 41 Teachers in the Batticaloa and Ampara Districts. Beside this, extra coaching classes are being conducted for 268 students in 03 Secondary Schools in Manmunai West DS Division and Aligambay in the Ampara District.

From the year 2013 onwards and Caritas EHED's Peace Unit has changed its methodology in working with Inter Religious Forums, Rural Development Organizations and works closely with the community to promote peace initiatives at macro level. In addition, Caritas EHED implemented health related projects focusing on Non Communicable Diseases such as Thalassemia & Cancer Diseases in Batticaloa District.



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## Staff of Caritas Batticaloa - EHED



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Chilaw - Janasaviya**

*Janasaviya* in Chilaw diocese commenced in 1969 and from its inception was instrumental in working out priorities for animation and leadership training. This provided an effective basis in the rehabilitation work necessitated by the cyclone which had affected many of the marginalised villages in Chilaw. This rehabilitation work involved a process of animation whereby those affected were encouraged to search for sustainable methods of development.

The first Director of Janasaviya was Fr. Setunge who served from 1969 to 1981. He formulated the initial programmes and strategies for the centre so that in 1981 when Fr. Srilal took over, he was able to widen its scope and create greater animation for continuing the programmes. Fr. Srilal served till 1987 and thereafter, Rev Fr. Peter Charles served as Director for a very short period. His emphasis on the methodology of animation was obtained by its success in the implementation of programmes of the Janasaviya. In 1987 Fr. Patrick Wijesinghe was appointed Director and he served on till 1994, when Fr. Ivan Peter Fernando took over.

The centre under Fr. Ivan Peter Fernando concentrated heavily on animation programmes to build an awareness of leadership mobilization. These programmes had been successful in creating motivation for the setting up of savings and credit societies. As usual in most marginalised communities, one of the biggest drawbacks to development, is lack of capital. Due to the inability to provide sufficient collateral guarantees, often the community had to depend on money lenders for whatever capital requirements they

needed. This often debared them from formulating or developing any programme for growth.

The women's credit and thrift societies provided a great motivation for development and an effective women's group, Kantha Samithi came into being. Since Chilaw had a large fishing



**Livelihood support for women**

community, a pilot project was started in Ambakandawila. This too had as its base a thrift and credit society which later was able to mobilize its savings and provide loans even for the purchase of boats. All fishermen's credit societies had Bank accounts and these provided for a greater mobility of cash reserves for development of programmes geared to the betterment of the community. In keeping with the basic aspirations of SEDEC, that development should be animated and sustained by the community. These fishermen's societies acted as collateral and process applications for loans from Commercial Banks. Since the recipients were members of the society itself, the guarantee of repayment was assured.

Animation programmes at Janasaviya were carried out regularly and animators from different religious and ethnic backgrounds received their training at the centre's office. This training enabled them to move out to marginalised communities and provided the

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





animation needed for leadership mobilization and identification of development priorities. Further, the Centre continued not only ongoing programmes for animation but also had specific dates during which animators and coordinators provided feed-back for on-going programme which were discussed and strategies decided upon.

Janasaviya was administratively directed by a Board of Management, consisting of representatives from the Deaneries and a certain number of nominated lay persons. The goal of Janasaviya expounded by its Director with the guidance the Bishop of Chilaw was to make the people realize their full potential as agents of change and enabled them to realize their goals. It was this vision that had enabled Janasaviya to develop various self-help projects especially for the women's sector such as jam-making, yogurt making and poultry farming. It also had a sector for skill development to enable self-help programmes.

Janasaviya believed that, through personal effort, community development could take place in keeping with the present demands. Janasaviya had commenced courses in typing shorthand and computer studies, in order to provide for the marginalised youth who did not have the facilities, to obtain such training. The objective of this intervention was, by this process of skill education, youth would be better equipped to deal with the demands of the times.

Pre-schools too were of an important programme of Janasaviya not only as an entry point for community mobilization but also as a programme whereby the benefits of education was impressed

on the community. The response for the pre-school programme had made Janasaviya embark on a training programme for pre-school teachers who thereafter, in their own communities, either started pre-schools or worked in one of the existing pre-schools.

The problem caused by sea erosion has occupied Janasaviya. Action was being taken to rehabilitate those affected by the erosion and also various programmes were formulated to provide a lasting solution to the problem which was affecting, to a great extent, the marginalized fishing community.

Whilst development programmes continued and extended Janasaviya Chilaw was also directly involved in many peace and justice issues affecting the people of the area. In many of these instances CSL-SEDEC too provided the necessary facilities. Three issues which had been highlighted strongly were the coal power project in the Norachcholai area, the Iranawila VOA project and the violence and abuses that affected the Wavamba provincial council elections.

In taking up these issues and projecting the needs of the people, Janasaviya was putting into practice the thoughts of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. *"It is not enough simply to give assistance to individuals or social groups. It is necessary to help them to take into their own hands their destiny, their life, their family as far as they are able, and also to stir those around them, their respective institutions, the intermediary bodies or the civil authorities to assume their social responsibilities. In all this, development does not concern only food, shelter and health care, it covers the total person."*





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

Rev. Fr. Edward Karunayake who was in charge of Janasaviya, was appointed Director from 2001-2008. He too had placed special emphasis on animation programmes which were very strong and active. Housing programmes, environment programmes, pre-school programmes, inclusive of providing training and facilities and childhood development for pre-school teachers continued and have been strengthened. The Poland scholarship programme for children was operative and was of tremendous value, especially to many marginalised families. A number of programmes too had been initiated for women's development and children, including peace groups and children's groups.



**Fr. Edward Karunanayake**

Strategies for Inter-religious dialogue and programmes to create awareness and initiate action on various issues affecting the area including election monitoring etc., had been developed and Janasaviya had also

organized rallies highlighting problems caused by Norochchalai coal power plant.

Further, greater awareness programmes had been set up, to encourage and develop, with group participation, organic farming and sustainable agriculture. Fr. Edward had also organized programmes concerning human rights and national peace issues. Rev. Fr. Abraham Barnaba took over as Diocesan Director of Chilaw from April 2008.

### 2008-2018

Caritas Chilaw mainly focuses on empowering the people spiritually, socially, economically, culturally and politically in order to develop their innate abilities and make them partners in the development process.

However, it was very difficult to change the attitudes of the marginalized who were used to state hand-outs and political assistance to obtain their needs. Bishop Frank Marcus wanted them to move out of the hand-out stage and become sustainably self-sufficient, so that they would independently develop their own means of survival; *"What is referred to as sustainable development"*. Unfortunately his first gift to establish this concept was to donate two young goats to a poor family and enabled them by obtaining the produce of these young goats to start a small farm. But he soon realized that the help given in such a manner to the poor would not raise their standard of living.

The beneficiaries had to learn to use their own resources to get out of their cycle of waiting for hand-outs. The late Bishop decided to form small dynamic societies in the parishes of the diocese and persuaded the people to believe that by the use of their own resources, they could get out of the situations they were placed. This process was successful though at the beginning people were reluctant to risk their savings. Gradually they were encouraged by the Bishop to start dynamic societies in all the parishes in the diocese. The progress made by the activities is self-evident from the fact that the people were able to come up by forming self-help groups by using their own financial resources.



**World Food Day Commemoration 2018**

After 20 years of activities under the new method of thinking, 170 new animation groups have been formed with nearly 18,000 beneficiaries in the diocese. Poverty stricken and destitute people have risen on their own feet and learned to safeguard their own rights. Great service was rendered to farmers, locals and fisher folk through the National Animation Programme that was initiated to empower the people. It had created the second line of leadership and serves the people with a number of programmes, such as focusing on alternative, economic strategies and options, the human rights and advocacy, collaborating with state and NGO organizations and conducting inter-religious programmes.

In respect to all religions and cultures, conducting peace programmes to foster solidarity among ethnic groups, organizing sports festivals to enhance cooperation are the other initiatives undertaken. In addition, to foster the unity among villages, cultural programmes were conducted for the children. Awareness programme for Sunday school teachers of the diocese and nutrition programme for primary school children prepared by selected parents were also initiated.

The Lenten contributions have been a great support in giving relief to the victims and vulnerables in the face of disasters. Through the diocesan programme 'Buddhidana', a helping hand was extended to children whose aspirations for education had been a mere dreams, due to their parents facing various constraints of economic situations.



**Workshop on Promoting Healing & Reconciliation**

Caritas Janasaviya has also implemented peace programmes after the end of the ethnic conflicts. This has brought peace and harmony among all religious communities, Buddhists, Hindus, Islamists and Catholics in the areas. The institution attempting to overcome the religious barriers through reconciliation of different ethnic groups, has been an on-going difficult task.

Special mention to be made to all the animation groups who have given their untiring services to carry out this process and Rt. Rev. Dr. Valance Mendis, Bishop of the Diocese and to all former directors of SEDEC, especially Rev. Fr. Abraham Barnaba [2009-2012], Rev. Fr. Roncalli De Silva [2013-2015], who has rendered a yeoman service and to Rev. Fr. Anton Wyman who has brought in new vigor and enthusiasm to the institution.





**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## Staff of Caritas Chilaw - Janasaviya



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## Caritas Colombo – Seth Sarana



Seth Sarana the social arm of the Archdiocese of Colombo was set up under the directorship of Rev. Fr. Malcolm Ranjith, Archbishop and Secretary of the Pontifical Congregation for Divine worship in Rome. In 1985 the Archdiocesan centre for human development was initiated by Rev. Fr. Malcolm Ranjith at the request of the then Archbishop Most Rev. Nicholas Marcus Fernando. However, Fr. Malcolm, anxious that this organization could be named in a manner which would make its impact as a symbol hope for the marginalised, requested the then Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese Rt. Rev. Oswald Gomis, an erudite scholar (then Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Colombo), to coin a name which could identify the mission of this organisation which had as its central vision the empowerment of the poor.



**Youth leadership programme**

Bishop Oswald Gomis suggested the name Sethsarana and thus was Caritas Colombo designated thereafter, expressing by its very name, that it was a symbol of hope for the poor. The logo of Caritas Colombo - Sethsarana symbolizes the hand of God reaching out to man in “the creation” of Adam as visualized by Michelangelo in a fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The logo symbolizes the hand of God reaching out to all those in need.

The main concept of Rev. Fr. Malcolm Ranjith was to develop the organization based on the fact that the Christian vision of justice and equality should be made visible through the work of Sethsarana. He also emphasized the spirituality of Social Action of the Church, and based on these realities, he was instrumental in developing programmes of animation and mobilization of the community through such animation and developing methods of providing facilities for gaining knowledge to the marginalised so that they could take their rightful place in society.



**Fr. Malcolm Ranjith talking to fisher folk**

Due to his concern and the efficiency of his guidance, the Colombo Archdiocese has incorporated a diversity of programmes geared to bringing about the integral development of man. It sets out as its vision, the promotion and fostering of a society based on Justice and Peace by mobilizing the people, strengthening their self-reliance and leading them towards integral human development. In order to achieve this goal Sethsarana has set up a Buddhidana and higher education Scholarship Fund to assist deserving and persevering children of school going age to complete their studies.

A higher education scholarship is also offered to poor students to continue their studies in the University or Technical Colleges.



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

Seth Sarana believes that, by this method of education, a group of young leaders aware of the needs of their community, will be able to assist in the development of the community. A parish loan scheme had been set up to assist in setting small-scale self-employment schemes which will enable the marginalised to develop their skills and generate an income for their development.

A women's desk carried out specific programmes to create awareness among women with regard to their role in society, provided them with skill training and animate them for the setting up of small credit and thrift societies.

Special attention was also paid to women affected by violence, and seminars and discussions were held regularly to mobilize women to take an active role in developing their community.

Seth Sarana had also given guidance and assistance in the building of low cost houses and had animated and motivated groups in these projects to develop community welfare measures. It had also formed viable grass-root level groups in Muthurajawela to pool their available resources for the development of the community. Slums and shanties which are common within the crowded city limits were visited by animators who motivated the community to identify their immediate requirements for the improvement of



**Fr. Malcolm Ranjith at an Educational Programme**

their living conditions and provided joint community action to establish these conditions. Awareness and animation programmes were also held to mobilize fishermen to form cooperatives incorporating credit and thrift schemes, and to motivate self-employment projects in marginalised areas.

Concerning Peace and Justice issues Sethsarana had organized on-going awareness programmes and mobilized public opinion against child abuse. It had also provided leadership training and agitated for worker rights and better welfare measures in the Free Trade Zone.



Fr. Basil Wickremasinghe who took over as Director in 1991, believed that Sethsarana could with greater flexibility and viability needed in the Archdiocese which had a cross section of the population provided

the animation and training that would create an awareness for development programmes suited to each community ranging from the marginalised villagers to the shanty and slum dwellers. With this objective in mind, Sethsarana provided the leadership training necessary by means of seminars and discussions using techniques of communication such as street dramas and visual aids. Sethsarana also, under Fr. Basil Wickremesinghe, successfully completed a housing programme in Athurugiriya mainly for church workers who did not own land.





He also set up a working committee of clergy and laity to draw up suggestions and proposals regarding the continuing problems of the Free Trade Zone workers, especially with regard to their accommodation and terms of service. This committee also discussed various other issues pertaining to social justice and developed programmes which could further the Seth Sarana concepts.

In 2001, Rev. Fr. Francis Jayakody took over from Fr. Basil and he brought with him his expertise in the parishes he had served of participatory shelter programmes for marginalised persons. Seth Sarana, under his directorship, commenced working on setting up a housing estate in Kindigoda for the marginalised. He also continued in carrying out the animation programmes and community mobilization concepts that had made Seth Sarana a dynamic and vibrant organization.

Another innovation initiated by Fr. Basil Wickremasinghe was the setting up of a Job Bank to act as a point of reference by providing a link between the availability of jobs and the demand for employment.

During Fr. Francis Jayakody's tenure, the activities of the Job Bank were strengthened and procedures established. The Job bank was recognized as a viable programme designed to help those who did not have the know-how of obtaining information regarding job opportunities and the method of application for such employment. The tsunami devastation and the rehabilitation programmes in the Archdiocese thereafter, occupied a great deal of time of the Directors, since a great deal of ordination and managerial expertise was needed to channel the assistance received. The setting up of

branch tsunami offices in areas badly affected and developing projects for providing livelihood, became an urgent concern at that time.

In 2006 Rev. Fr. Jude Raj Fernando, took over as Director, and while he concentrated on continuing and concluding various tsunami rehabilitation and housing programmes, he also brought into Sethsarana a new perspective, that of drawing in youth and children into its programmes. A Childrens' Parliament was the outcome of this new vision. Schools were clustered to provide for student representation in the Childrens' Parliament and recently a successful session was held with children presenting their viewpoint on various issues to an audience of parents, the law enforcement agencies, officials of the Child Protection Authority and various other civic organizations committed to children's issues.



Under Fr. Jude's guidance, drama and musical presentations too, are used as means to focus the problems faced by children. In order to provide greater facilities for students, arrangements





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were made to utilize the Polish Scholarships for children in marginalized families. These scholarships enable the families to participate actively in the education of their respective children.

Under Fr. Jude's leadership, Seth Sarana had also taken under its aegis an agricultural farm in order to provide practical training to youth in agriculture. The farm too had helped Seth Sarana to divert whatever income it received from it to various other programmes to benefit the marginalized. Fr. Jude Raj had always been conscious of the fact that livelihood programmes would not attain their purpose unless they were accompanied by a dynamic marketing policy.



**Workshop on civil society activities**

Hence, in furtherance of this view a welfare shop had been established by Seth Sarana to display and sell goods produced by such projects and animation groups. The welfare shop too provided the staff at Seth Sarana with essential food items at reasonable prices. Being aware of the housing issues in the Archdiocese, Fr. Jude intended making use of the Lenten Fund to assist the community. Seth Sarana has diversified its programmes to meet the needs and aspirations of a the multi racial, multi religious population in the Archdiocese. It had also incorporated into its activities an important sectors of society, the youth and children who, Fr. Jude Raj Fernando believes, if given the basic

insights into the social teachings of the Church, would be catalysts of change to create a better society.

Fr. K. A Jude Raj had integrated Seth Saranas for greater efficiency and effectiveness of its variety of programmes, all of which were packages for the benefit of the needy in the Archdiocese of Colombo.

### 2008-2018

At the outset of the war coming to an end, Seth Sarana atmosphere changed. No longer did the sudden burst of a bomb brought terror into the hearts of the people, as fear of the war receded the aspirations of the people took on new avenues. They wanted a better life but the war expenses had drained the financial resources of the country. In addition, the levels of corruption, bribery and demand for incomes increased. Seth Sarana was attempting to provide assistance to the people especially to the children who lacked even basic nutritional food, in addition to reconciliation, providing land, re-establishing households etc., was a difficult task.



**Flood Relief Assistance in 2017**

In 2009, new projects from Caritas Germany provided funds for children and educational projects. A social work project and the Archdiocesan Lenten fund provided funds for school library facilities.

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In June 2009, Seth Sarana started its model farm and training centre and concluded the Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programmes. In July Caritas Italiana commenced a livelihood programme and promoted a child protection policy. In 2010, the integral human development through community empowerment became the goal of Caritas Seth Sarana. The Lenten 'Poor Relief Fund' of the Archdiocese assisted to further strengthen the human development through community empowerment programmes. In September of the same year, Caritas Colombo - Seth Sarana introduced "Cross Over" leadership training introduced for children and wound up their yearly activities with Seth Sarana "Caritas Colombo Trade Fair and Exhibition" at Municipal Grounds, in Negombo.



**Training workshop on mushroom cultivation**

In September 2011, children's talent show was held at St. Joseph's college auditorium. The Archdiocesan 'Poor Relief Fund' assisted the children's talent show named; 'Hiru Dutu Pini Bindu' was a great success. In 2011, it was decided by the director and advisors to have a capacity building programme for Archdiocesan deanery development coordinators at New Delhi, India, funded by Caritas Germany.

Meanwhile, His Eminence Malcom Cardinal Ranjith who recognized the potential and the capacity and the ability of Seth Sarana personnel assigned to work with the Providence Centre

at Bandaragama which would serve as a second training Centre. Meanwhile, Caritas Poland once again assisted in a new partnership for children, psychosocial, and vocational training programmes.

In 2012, the director of Seth Sarana, Rev. Fr. Jude Raj Fernando was transferred and Rev. Fr. Rohan De Alwis was appointed as the new director. A new office, at Paul the VI centre at Fort was inaugurated to house the Caritas Seth Sarana organization, enabling all the units involved to be based in one central office.

In 2013, the Lenten programme targeted vulnerable children in the Archdiocese of Colombo and Caritas Japan assisted in the commencement of the Safe Labour Migration project. Meanwhile, the Integral Human Development - Civic Dialogue and Cross Community Activities (IHDC) continued getting the necessary inputs to strengthen their activities. In 2014, the Lenten programme in collaboration with Seth Sarana, worked towards the poverty elevation housing projects to help the needy.



**Religious Leaders Exposure visit - Colombo to Batticaloa 2018**

Meanwhile, Seth Sarana commenced a programme to create mutual understanding for prevention of discrimination. The respect for the rights of religious minorities and the Lenten support for housing projects gained considerable focus during that period. In 2015, Seth Sarana brought in a family livelihood supported scheme through micro finance system. It also urged civil society participation to promote good governance and for fostering religious harmony.

Meanwhile, in 2016, Seth Sarana obtained funding by the Swiss Development Corporation as the deep impact partner in the Safe Labour Migration programme in Gampaha district. The families of prisoners were also taken care of under a programme. Rev. Fr. Rohan De Alwis was replaced by new director Rev. Fr. D. N. L. Ramanayake. In 2017, the weather conditions in the western province changed dramatically, creating havoc in the lives of the citizens. Thus, a flood relief programme was organized by Seth Sarana with the funding assistance of Deutsche bank to help the victims. Misereor also provided kitchen utensils to flood and landslide families in Sri Lanka.



**Election awareness programme in 2017**

In November, of the same year it was decided to work out a strategic planning workshop for SHGs for 3 years from 2018-2020 at the new Centre in Bandaragama. Meanwhile, Seth Sarana

provided equipment and supplied drinking water to the village of Palligoda South in Kaluthara District under a micro project funded by Caritas Italiana.



**Opening the new Seth Sarana Office at Archbishop's House**

Sarana to guide the organization on the lines of administration, projects and finance.

In 2018, Seth Sarana was relocated to a new office facility on the Jubilee Hall at Archbishop's House, and His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith appointed the advisory board for Seth

*"If you can find people who are good at motivating others and getting the best out of people, they are the ones you want. There are plenty of so-called experts, but not as many great motivators of people."*

- Richard Branson



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**



## Staff of Caritas Colombo - Seth Sarana



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Galle - SED Galle**

SED Galle in the Galle diocese based itself very much on what is referred to as the Janasaviva concept. It was that any programme derives its motivation, animation from the people themselves. The strength of the people was expressed in the decisions they took in planning undertaken and finally in the achievements of implemented programmes.

Rev. Fr. Dudley Attanayake was appointed the first Director of the institution. After that in 1984, Rev. Fr. Paul Fernando was appointed the second Director of the institution, and during his time he commenced animation programmes. Since SED Galle too is in a district which has a large majority non-Christians, entry to the larger community is considerably difficult. Fortunately for SED Galle, Mr. Liyanage a Buddhist was very impressed with the concepts of SED Galle and volunteered his services. With his assistance SED Galle has made tremendous inroads into the area. In 1990 Fr. Damian Fernando took over and he consolidated the programmes that had been initiated.

In 1996, Rev. Fr. Dudley Attanayake was appointed again as Director and he obtained insights to the vision of SED Galle and was able to develop an active animation unit. Fr.



**Fr, Michael Rajendram**

Micheal Rajendran, the Director of SED Galle had, as his chief coordinator, Mr. Liyanage, a non-Christian who was actively involved in projecting the ideals of SEDEC, and it was he who gave continuity too, since he had been associated with the movement almost from its inception.

A network of credit and thrift societies have been established by SED Galle which provided agricultural loans. The outer perimeter of the Galle diocese consisted of a number of colonization schemes or settlements and these thrift societies, set up by the community, provided a revolving fund for the members. In the late 1980's however due to the insurgency in the South a temporary break occurred in the activities of these societies and SED Galle had to immerse totally in programmes of rehabilitation. They too adopted the Southern violence rehabilitation programme but due to the acute effects of the violence in this area the programme could not be extensively implemented. However, taking the prolonged unrest and instability into account, SED Galle had concentrated in forming cluster villages of 10 to 12 villages around areas that had been most affected by the violence and had animated the communities to set up small associations.

These small 'Gami Jana Pubudu' groups had commenced once more to set up thrift and credit societies so as to mobilize savings, obtain counter funding and set up small scale development programmes. The Gami Jana Pubudu concept was an on-going project with SED Galle trying to provide more animation and leadership training programme. The diocese too had a plantation

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sector and adult literacy classes had been promoted and reading rooms setup as a means for animating the plantation worker to decide on their priorities of development. Agro fishing was also encouraged as a means of development for the very marginalised villages. SED Galle however, found it difficult to make use of all available opportunities due to lack of animators.

Fr. Micheal hoped that, with the assistance of national SEDEC, he would be able to develop an animators training programme which would create the awareness that community development also meant the development of persons. In 1998 Rev. Fr. Nihal Nanayakkara took over and he further strengthened the existing programmes of SED Galle. His term of office as Director was short as he was succeeded by Rev. Fr. Bernard Fernando and in 2001, Fr. Raymond Wickremesinghe took over. He too was not able to start any new programmes since he held office as Director for only 3 months.

In 2002, Rev. Fr. Herman Fernando succeeded him as Director. He was keen to further develop the animation programmes and also built inter- religious dialogue, and developed bridges of friendship between the north and the south so as to increase understanding and acceptance of ethnic communities. He was also in the forefront of the temporary rehabilitation that was necessitated by the tsunami devastation. Meanwhile, diocesan changes took place with the resignation of Bishop Elmo Perera and the appointment of Bishop Harold Antony Perera.

In 2006, Fr. Damian Arsakularatne was appointed Director. His first priority was to concentrate on the housing and livelihood

needs of the tsunami victims. SED Galle, under his guidance obtained the participation of the beneficiaries in building the houses and this had allowed for greater involvement of the recipients and active enthusiasm. Caritas SED Galle, with active assistance from Caritas Sri Lanka, started its Tsunami programme from emergency relief activities soon after the calamity, to developing its own strategies by capacity building of physical and human resources.

Caritas SED Galle focused on assisting the Southern province following its vision and mission statements. In the first phase emergency relief was provided and basic human needs such as food, drinking water, clothes and sanitation needs were met. Kitchen and other utensils were provided for the internally displaced persons who had been relocated in camps etc. Phase II covered rehabilitation and development and activities were divided into following operational sectors; shelter, community constructions, water and sanitation (Watsan) and livelihood Psychosocial and Education concerns too received attention.

SED Galle, under the guidance of Fr. Damian, obtained the participation of the beneficiaries in building the houses and this has allowed for greater involvement of



**Fr. Damian Arsakularatne at a Tsunami rehabilitation programme**





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the recipients and active enthusiasm. Fr. Damian's concept concerning animation of small groups too had the desired effect. The entry point of the animators into the tsunami affected, mainly Buddhist areas, was to mobilize the community to form small groups, first to participate in a shramadana activity and clear and restore the area. By this approach, unity was built and an insight obtained by the animators concerning the livelihood needs of the people. Based on their findings, programmes which were feasible, income generating and group based, were formed. Fr. Damian, pointed out the number of livelihood products that provided sustainable development to many, and not only to the tsunami affected, but also to the marginalised. In this programmes he had obtained the participation and supported many of the Buddhist clergy and non-Catholic religious leaders.

Some of these projects that were being successfully implemented were the production of soap, lace and garments, stationary, including stationary for schools, coir and coconut products, cement block manufacture. And in association with the local government authorities an environmental project for recycling waste and converting it to compost was implemented. All these programmes had generated a sustainable income to the stakeholders and through this system, not only had Caritas SED Galle had changed the lives of the community but it had established itself strongly in the integral part of the society.

During the period referred, Caritas SED Galle carried out a number of programmes through Self-Help Groups (SHG) in the diocese of Galle, based on their needs and challenges faced.



Under a project funded by Holy Trinity Foundation, 565 Catholic families in 35 SHGs in the district of Galle, Matara and Hambanthota were supported. One of the objectives of this project was to improve the livelihood of low income Catholic families. Caritas SED Galle has targeted 51 SHGs, 11 CBOs and 16 Children Societies under this project titled, 'Boosting Community Living Standards through Mainstreaming the Marginalized in the Society'. This project started in 2016 and continued till December 2017. The overall objectives were to provide suitable living standards to the poor and needy in the districts of Galle, Marata and Hambantota by increasing the access to community base credit for investment and employment opportunities.

In addition the following interventions were carried out for the socio and economic development of the people living in the Diocese of Galle.

- Creating employment opportunities through training and capacity building
- Children have greater participation in Children Society Activities
- Distribution of spectacles
- Capacity building programme for volunteer leaders
- Home garden development programmes

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- Provision of sanitation facilities (Construction of toilet facilities etc.,)
- Sewing / Batik training
- Training on brick making and cane weaving industries
- Scholarship for selected students



Caritas SED Galle organized a training and planning session, and the resource person was Charles Camara from Sweden. He emphasised the importance of changing the attitudes of people from charity to empowerment.

- Leadership and management training in the respective three districts for 90 CBO Leaders

Caritas Sweden funded a project focused on the vulnerable women-headed households in Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Caritas

SED Galle selected 03 Divisional Secretariat Divisions in Galle, Matara and Hambantota of the Southern Province (Diocese of Galle) for the identification and problem analysis. During the analysing process with the participation of representatives of the three divisions, certain problems were identified as stated below, especially among women headed households. Thus, appropriate project activities were designed to bring solutions:

- Mal-nutrition of children
- Poor water and sanitary conditions
- Low level of education of children and school drop-outs
- Poor health conditions
- Barriers to Peace building

The interventions of this project facilitated to some extent the process of transforming the women headed households to be more independent in achieving self-reliance.

*"They should show themselves animated by a spirit of understanding, an unselfishness, ready to cooperate loyally in achieving objects which are good in themselves or can be turned to good."*

- Pope John XXIII





**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## Staff of Caritas Galle - SED



**GOLDEN JUBILEE** of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018



## Caritas Jaffna – HUDEC



Caritas Jaffna - HUDEC was established in 1973, by the late Bishop of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai ably assisted by Rev. Fr. J. B. Devarajah to manage an emergency situation at a time when the displaced people came from the South due to the ethnic conflict. HUDEC carried out relief and resettlement work in the Jaffna diocese then consisting of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu Mannar Vavuniya districts.

During the time of Rev. Fr. Devarajah, from 1972 to 1981, immediate assistance in meeting the basic needs for livelihood and long term settlement programmes, were initiated in the villages of Illupaikadavi and Valaipadhu in 1972. Funding assistance for this was donated by Caritas Australia. During this period health programmes and leadership programmes for women, started mainly, in Pandatheripu, Atchuvveli and Mannar. Youth were trained and encouraged agriculture in the Mannar district. In 1995 Rev. Fr. J. B. Devarajah was appointed National Director - SEDEC.

In 1977 there was an ethnic problem and people came from the South and Upcountry and as no other NGOs were functioning in the area, HUDEC faced the responsibility of supporting the displaced people. The major resettlement of this people were carried out in Keerisuddan, Ottysuddan, Periyakaddu, Kannaty, Kent and Dollar farm in the Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts. The Sub-office of HUDEC started functioning in Kilinochchi in 1977, and it was involved in Agricultural and

resettlement activities. In the year 1981, Jaffna diocese was divided and the new Mannar Diocese was established. The Jaffna diocese consists of Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts and Mannar diocese consists of Mannar, and Vavuniya districts.

Rev. Fr. James Pathinathan took charge of HUDEC from 1982 to 1983. During his period shelters were put-up and wells constructed in Mankulam for the resettlement programme. During his period awareness programmes were carried out on caste, dowry system and politics for the village people and also youth groups were established in the villages. The construction of the HUDEC Main office building was completed.

During the period of Rev. Fr. M. E. Pius from 1983 to 1992, HUDEC carried out emergency relief assistance, resettlement, construction of pre-schools, water and sanitation and educational assistance programmes.



**Rev. Fr. C.G. Jeyakumar  
(in the middle)**

A small medical clinic was established in the HUDEC office to help the people. An orphanage in Kopay “PASACHOLAI” and “ANPAHAM” in Ariyalai were started to care for the orphaned children. During this period the Akkarayan water reservoir was renovated by HUDEC. Forest lands were cleared in Akkarayan, Ponnagar, Uruthirapuram and Vaddakadchi and people were



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resettled in these areas. During the 1983, riots Tamil people came from the South and they were given emergency food, clothes, shelter and water and sanitation facilities, by HUDEC.

Rev. Fr.J. H. Jebanessan was in charge of HUDEC from 1992 to 1997. He continued the relief and rehabilitation programmes and initiated vocational training for school leavers (boys and girls). A mass exodus took place in the year 1995 and about five-hundred thousand people from Jaffna were displaced to Vanni and Thenmaradchy areas. HUDEC main office also was shifted to the Mirusuvil village in Thenmaradchy. Dry rations, shelters, water and sanitation facilities were given by HUDEC. Mobile medical services also provided to the displaced people. On 29th March 1997, Fr.H.,H. Jebanesan expired during his term of office.

In the year 1997, Fr.R. Soosainathan took charge of HUDEC. During this period, the displaced people from Jaffna began to come back. HUDEC assisted in livelihood activities. Farmers, fishermen and women were given equipment to restart their livelihood activities. Also HUDEC gave financial assistance to the families of war victims.

HUDEC also started to focus on development activities. In 1997, HUDEC-HDL MCR tile factory was established and this provided employment to many men and women. 55 pre-schools were established in the Jaffna district with the support of Redbana. Allowances for 55 pre-school teachers, in the Jaffna district and 23 in the Vanni district, were given.

Rev. Fr. C. G. Jeyakumar was appointed to HUDEC in the year 1997. Farmers, fishermen, women societies were formed in the remote villages and given evolving loans in the year 1999. 35 societies were formed consisting 2,853 members actively involved in farming, fishing and self-employment activities. CAFOD and MISEREOR supported this revolving loan project.

In the year 2000, Animation, Human Rights and Peace units were started and awareness programmes were carried out in the villages. Shelters, wells and toilets were constructed in the Jaffna district with the funding of ECHO and NECOD Resettlement projects in the year 2002 to 2004. In December 2004, the tsunami devastation occurred and HUDEC focused on the tsunami victims. Permanent shelters were built in Mullaitivu and Jaffna districts. Livelihood, psychosocial and children programmes were also carried out for the tsunami victims.

HUDEC was involved in relief, rehabilitation and development activities. The ongoing programmes were Tsunami reconstruction, relief and rehabilitation for

war victims, animation, peace, human rights, women, educational assistance to children who lost their parents. In addition, mobile



**Tsunami transitional shelters**



medical services, livelihood activities and Micro-financing were among the many programmes carried out by HUDEC.

### 2008-2018

The entire northern region was devastated, especially during the final battle between the Sri Lankan Security Forces and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) from the year 2006 to 2009. The ethnic war ended on the 18th of May 2009. The total population was maimed by the ethnic war. The churches and the parish houses also were demolished, or were badly damaged. The entire population (the population according to the Statistics in November 2008: Kilinochchi District 219, 878 and Mullaithivu District 259,293 totalling 479,171 people) were in the area became Internally Displaced People (IDPs). They were accommodated in IDP camps in Jaffna and Vavuniya districts.



**IDP camps**

INGOs and NGOs, supplied dry rations and other items to the families in the IDP Camps. Caritas Jaffna- HUDEC was the only organization supplied supplementary food for the families. Vegetables, fish, eggs, coconuts, chicken, etc., were supplied to

In 2009, IDPs families who came to Jaffna district were accommodated in seven camps in Kodikamam, Chavakachcheri, Kaithady, Kopay and Mirusuvil. Many

the IDP camps daily. This is one of the major achievements of Caritas Jaffna in the year 2009/2010.

In order to foster peace and harmony among the people in the North, two programmes were conducted in the Jaffna District. Eight villages were selected for these two programmes. Dialogue sessions were organized for the people and religious leaders who belong to all four religions. Exposure programmes were arranged for the families from the North to visit South. They had an opportunity to mingle with each other and this has created reconciliation and understanding among them to a certain extent.

Pokkaruppu pre-school at Maruthankery DS Division and Sarathjeevan Tharisanam pre-school at Punkudutivu, Velanai DS Division were constructed by Sunbeam Foundation and implemented by Caritas Jaffna in the years 2014 and 2017 respectively.

Nutritional food and educational materials were also provided for the pre-school children daily. More than 70 children attend these pre-schools



**Feeding programme for children**

every year. Further, two more pre-schools were constructed at Ariyalai and Maniamthoddam by HUDEC in the years 2012 and 2016, respectively with the generous funds provided





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by Kindermissiowerk, Germany. More than 60 children are benefited by these pre-schools every year.

Vocational Training was given to the youth and the school drop-outs in 2013, with the support of Patrician Institute. Twenty youth were given 6 months training course on motorbike mechanism, arc welding, sewing, general electrical work and shorthand typing. They were awarded with certificates by Patrician Institution.



**Fr. Eugene Francis at a livelihood support programme**

Livelihood assistance was given to 254 women and persons released from rehabilitation centres in Mirusuvil, Tellipalai, Uduvil and Jaffna, who were affected during the war. They were helped in income generation activities in poultry, cattle rearing, small business, IT and sewing. Most of them are earning a sufficient income to take care of their families.

Caritas Jaffna-HUDEC has established 89 women groups and 56 village peace groups in the year 2009.

Grade 5 Scholarship programme was conducted in 12 schools in the Jaffna District from the year 2014 to 2017. This programme

was funded by Caritas Korea through Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC. The schools in the remote villages and the students from vulnerable families were selected for this programme. 544 students were given extra classes, model papers, educational materials, hygienic kits and nutritional food items.



**Grade 5 scholarship programme**

IHDP programme was successfully conducted during the period from 2010 to 2013 in the District of Jaffna. 21 groups were formed in 21 villages and given funds to start self-employment. Community mobilization and Empowerment, Social Justice and Sustainable Peace, Community based Disaster Preparedness and psychosocial programmes were conducted in the villages. 27,112 persons were benefitted by this IHDP programme.

*"Peace is a commitment and a manner of life which demands that the legitimate aspirations of all should be satisfied, such as access to food, water and energy, to medicine and technology, or indeed the monitoring of climate change."*

- Pope Benedict XVI

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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

**Staff of Caritas Jaffna - HUDEC**



**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Kandy-SETIK**

SETIK was originally started as a vocational training centre for youth before it took on the task of being the diocesan centre for SEDEC. As such, it concentrated in providing vocational training and guidance to youth so as to enable them to obtain suitable employment which would benefit both the individual and the community.

From its inception SETIK had various Directors to carry out the vision social doctrine of the church. Its very first Director was Fr. Antoninuf. Fr. Vianney Fernando (presently Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy), took over from him, and was later appointed a Director of SEDEC and thereafter, served as the Chairman of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development. He served seven years as Director and with his commitment to the social doctrines of the Church and set out the guidelines for its programmes and activities. Rev. Fr. Bala Rajendran took over from him and served for three years. He carried out the training programmes and also concentrated in developing a specific animation system to gain entry into the estate section, since this was an important area in the Kandy diocese.

Fr. Oswald Firth OMI thereafter, took over. It was evident the experience gained of developing animation programmes and his administrative skills in planning and putting into action diverse programmes to assist the varied marginalized in the diocese were reflected when he became the director of the national SEDEC.

Rev. Fr. Rohan de Silva, thereafter, took over as Director, but his period of service was limited to only two years and during this period he continued with the existing programmes and animation policies. Rev. Fr Nandana Manatunge thereafter was appointed Director.

SETIK served an area which had diversity of communities, ranging from plantation sector, the newly formed agro settlements, highly marginalized villages and a town population with crowded housing and its attendant



**Bishop Vianney with Fr. Milroy and Fr. Damian at a livelihood support programme**

problems. SETIK, in dealing with this diversity, had formulated various programmes of animation and leadership training. Fr. Nandana Manatunga who served for many years with advice from Bishop Vianney, organized animation awareness programmes for the plantation sector. This created opportunities for the animators under the programme to meet the people and understand their needs and to empower them to reach their objectives.

SETIK was also involved in a People's Forum for Alternate Development, specially geared for the plantation sector. This forum highlighted not only developmental issues but matters pertaining to the rights of the workers for better living conditions

**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**





and facilities to provide for a conducive atmosphere to educate their children and obtain for the families better housing facilities. SETIK, in addition, to these programmes, carried out animation through health education and nutrition education. It also set up pre-schools not only as entry points to community development but as a method of animating the mothers towards nutrition and health programmes. In addition, to these specific projects geared for the plantation sector, SETIK also had animation and leadership for the marginalized villages where the community decided on their priorities. They had been setting up small scale self-employment projects to generate income for the families, co-operative ventures, and combined development community projects.



In keeping with the ideals of SEDEC, SETIK aimed at community development alongside the development of the person, both were interwoven in the fabric of the dignity and integral development of man. SETIK highlighted issues pertaining to the ecological balance which was essential. In this the awareness programme and the agitation created by SETIK helped in the prevention of a thermal coal power project within the diocese. In recent times, SETIK also brought into focus the situation of Catholic children in the Kandy diocese affected by the policy of school admission. SETIK, however, while carrying out the objectives and goals of Catholic social action,

was mindful of the strong Buddhist influence in the region and hence obtained the active participation of the Buddhist clergy in its animation and leadership programmes and participated and assisted in development programmes organized by village communities in consultation with the clergy.

SETIK also had a networking system operative with other NGO's which enabled it to contribute effectively to various other connected development programmes under the directorship of Fr. George Sigamoney. He had developed a peace programme concentrated on education and awareness, which also, utilized the media to project its concerns. A Rainbow children's programme too had been set up which led to the establishment of children's Peace Centres which functioned irrespective of ethnic and religious boundaries. The main focus areas of these programme was to instill peace and unity through various activities. Capacity building programmes through animation was a very essential feature in SETIK. This led to the formation of small groups.

Other important activities carried out by SETIK under Fr. George Sigamoney, was the encouragement and development of small livelihood industries and environmental programmes, with special reference to safe environment in the Plantation sector. The training programmes that were established earlier had later been further strengthened. In



**Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney**



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In addition, activities concerning the integration of the plantation community into the Sri Lankan society, and problems pertaining to migrant workers, had led to many specific fields of activity by SETIK, in addition to the on-going issues of child labour and human rights. SETIK, by its work and involvement in social and community issues, exemplified the values and spirit of the social doctrine of the Church and has gained recognition in an environment that was extremely Buddhist in its attitudes and views.

### 2008 – 2018



**May Day celebration - 2009**

SETIK organization has served more than 5 decades in the central province of Sri Lanka to obtain various rights for workers in the plantation sector and villages in the rural areas. Targeting of the estate communities from the year 2006 up to 2016 created a

'safe environment for tea estates' communities under a special project and lifted the living conditions of 500 families. Activities including the renovation of line rooms, roofs, drinking water projects, sanitation facilities were provided for the estate workers.

The International Tea Day was celebrated in December 2010, in Nuwara Eliya town hall with the participation of 500 estate labourers. Main focus of the programme was to hand over the documents which specified the problems and challenges faced by the estate labourer, to the Hon. Minister. V. Ramakrishnan with

the hope that the issues would be taken up at the parliamentary discussions.

Rev. Fr. Camillus D. Jansz was appointed as the director of SETIK in 2009 and the International Migrants Day was celebrated in Caritas Kandy SETIK auditorium under the patronage of the former director of SETIK Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney and along with religious leaders and officers from the Foreign Employment Bureau in Kandy. In October 2011 International Children's Day was celebrated under the theme "*Let us protect children with love and Protection.*" More than 250 children representing children's societies from Kandy and Matale participated in the programme.

Then in 2013, SETIK conducted a number of programmes to empower the grass-root level communities and the participants were made aware of the services rendered by SETIK.



**Youth Rally organised by SETIK**

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A protest march and a gathering was organized on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014, in Kotagala under the theme 'Stop Child Labour', in commemoration of the International Children's Day. More than 400 children and adults participated in the programme. The present director of SETIK Rev. Fr. Desmond Perera, was appointed in 2014.

The district steering committee is the platform where the president and secretaries of all the relevant CBOs meet and discuss common issues, e.g. the Glendan Hospital which was constructed under the Indian government funds, was not functioning until the estate leaders organized a massive protest on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015, in collaboration with SETIK.



**Rev. Fr. Desmond Perera**

Universal Migrants Day was celebrated in 2016, at Ajantha Conference hall in Hatton under the theme, 'Let's protect the rights of Migrant Women' and in

parallel a programme was held at Strathdom Estate to create awareness of the rights of the Migrant women. An awards ceremony was held in June 2016, at Good Shepherd's Auditorium Kandy, jointly organized by the Dutch Bishops' Conference Lenten Campaign (DBLC) of SETIK and the Youth and Media Apostolate. Bishop Vianney Fernando was the Chief Guest. Over 350 youth took part in the programme and received certificates of the courses they had followed.

During the last decade the Central Province has been faced with numerous natural disasters and victims had to be provided with relief items such as, dry rations, garments, especially in the months of May 2016 and 2017.

Caritas Kandy commemorated the International Human Rights Day on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at the SETIK auditorium. Over 70 officers participated, including the chairman and the officers of the Human Rights Commission in Kandy. Among the participants were doctors, police officers, grama niladaris, probation officers etc., Dr. Chaminda Weerasiriwardena, senior counsellor and psychotherapist enlightened the audience on various psychological concepts on human rights.

In 2017, the International Tea Day was celebrated in Alapola estate in Matale district with a massive participation of estate labourers. The chief guest was the divisional secretary of Panvila and he enlightened the people of the importance of the plantation sector for Sri Lanka's economy.

*"Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of public interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on".*

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church





**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**



## Staff of Caritas Kandy - SETIK



**GOLDEN JUBILEE of Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC 1968-2018**

## Caritas Kurunegala – Janasetha



Janasetha commenced as an institution for activities of social welfare in 1987. The diocese has a very small percentage of Catholics, 2.8% of the total population in the district. Since this population is scattered within its geographical area and consists mainly of rural marginalized families, it was rather difficult for Janasetha at the inception to embark on any significant animation programmes.



**Discussion at a SHG meeting**

since it was suspected that many of the rural youth in the area were active members of the movement. The district came under a heavy army and police presence. It also resulted in the arrest and abductions of a number of persons. Fr. Joseph Tissera was very concerned with the situation and whenever possible tried to mediate. A graduate of the Coady International institute, he was anxious to share with the marginalized the concepts he had learnt of co-operatives as a base for development. Unfortunately, the existing situation tended to limit the activities that Janasetha could carry out.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Tissera was the first Director of this fledgling institution which he served from 1987 to 1992. This was also the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> JVP insurgency and

Fr. Peter Fernando took over from Fr. Tissera in 1992. By this time, Janasetha had moved from its social welfare activities towards a more developmental strategy. During the one year he was in office he continued to carry out the programmes that had been initially started by Fr. Tissera, but since his tenure of office was short it was not possible to establish any significant programmes of work.

However, with this new developmental strategy as its vision and mission, the centre commenced a number of projects to empower the people. Janasetha



**Livelihood support programme for women**

became the first centre to put effectively into use, what was termed the “Southern violence Programme.” This programme was of tremendous significance as it was the first to take into cognizance the situation created within the community in the late 1980’s. Violence and terrorism gripped the Southern provinces and in the mayhem that resulted often the bread-winner or members of a family suspected of assisting either the security forces or the insurgent groups were either killed or disappeared. The stigma attached to this tragedy was that these families found no security in their villages, fear made neighbors treat them like outcasts. Most of them had nowhere to turn for guidance or assistance. Many were young families who did not have any visible means of subsistence.





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

The diocese of Kurunegala was very much affected by this situation and Janasetha, with the assistance of National SEDEC, evolved a scheme whereby the families that in a wider sense, could be even termed refugees were given relief. Fr. Edward Ivan Fernando took over from Fr. Peter in 1993, and continued till 1997. During this period, this programme of rehabilitation came into being with women who were either widowed or who could not trace the breadwinner of their family were afforded opportunities to train for self-employment. Skills training for women was an important component of this programme. Fr. Sudath Tissera, who took over in 1997, not only consolidated the existing programmes but paid special attention to enable children to overcome the trauma and disruption in their lives. A children's and youth society called Dimuthu Lama Samajaya was formed, whereby children were encouraged to release their tensions through work and play programmes, and develop themselves without bearing any attached stigma to their potential leadership qualities.

Dimuthu Lama Samajaya was a very successful programme in the projection of the objectives formulated by the youngsters. Many



of these young persons were rendering their services as animators to neighbouring villages. Dimuthu Lama Samajaya, by enabling the children affected by the tragedy of violence to come to terms

with their trauma, assisted in creating a core group of committed youth who abhorred violence and were involved in creating peace and harmony.

Understanding the tragedy of conflict, these youngsters were keen to offer their friendship to the youth in the North. The Southern Violence Rehabilitation programme had given both the National SEDEC and the diocesan centres a model experience in not only rehabilitation but also in the re-integration of a section of the community, which due to various situations, been segregated by the community itself. It also provided understanding for formulating comprehensive programmes co-opting all members of a family, with each group inter-acting for the others development. Janasetha provided a working programme whereby the dignity of the human person could be maintained even in a climate that was suspicious and uncertain. It was unique in that, while strengthening the dignity of the person, it also provided the means by which society would recognize that dignity. The Southern violence rehabilitation programme, with its dual objectives, was worthy of emulation in instances where the marginalised were segregated and regarded with suspicion in their own milieu.

The housing programme carried out by Janasetha for the gypsy community was also one with far reaching results. The Gypsy community traditionally had been nomadic and moved from village to village, or from township to city with no real sustained means of livelihood. Invariably, whatever incomes they received was from their accustomed role, such as women resorting to fortune telling and men usually engaging in menial work or in





the selling of bric brac. Janasetha in their animation programmes realized that this community desired a permanent way of life, but one of the major drawbacks was lack of housing, hence it obtained an area of land that was habitually used for gypsy settlements in the outskirts of the city and motivated and guided the gypsies to build houses. Once these houses were built, and occupied by the community a change of outlook occurred.

The community sought for a more permanent mode of livelihood and desired to give education to their children. To enable them to realize this latter objective, Janasetha provided facilities for a pre-school. The demand for this had been so great that the community, assisted by Janasetha, was enlarging the building. Already the older children were attending the schools in the neighborhood and the community had become motivated to provide for their children a different and more stable way of life. Many in the community had started self-employment projects, such as joss-stick manufacture and viable income generating employment programmes were carried out by many of the family. Some have even ventured out for the sale of products to neighboring towns and have purchased small scooters and motor bicycles for this purpose.

While the above programmes were unique to the Kurunegala diocese, Janasetha had also taken into consideration the low income distribution in many of the outlying villages and had evolved an Advanced Level Scholarship programme for which monies were obtained from the Lenten collection. This programme provided a two year scholarship for one student from each parish. The main concept in this scholarship programme was that since the

rate of school drop outs was heavy due to financial constraints, these scholarships would be an incentive to students and also encourage parents to enable especially the brighter students to further their studies. Janasetha, aware of the needs of the diocese felt that education was an investment necessary for animation, leadership and community mobilization. This scholarship programme was aimed to educate the youth with skills developed in solving problems in their community.

In 2002, Fr. Ajith Rohan took over as Director. Keeping the objectives of Catholic Social teaching in mind, Janasetha organized numerous animation programmes, especially in the outskirt villages in the diocese. Communities belonging to land settlement schemes, mobilized by animators, decided on programmes needed for their betterment. Using cooperative principles of a united participation



**Rev. Fr. Ajith Rohan**

in activities, the community helps each other in the building of houses, foot-paths, wells and even in preparing the land and the harvesting of short term crops. These joint efforts were useful in building community togetherness and provided for team work with the implicit goal of strengthening the development of the community.

Kurunegala, like many other diocesan centres, also used the pre-



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

school programme and preventive health schemes as entry points to the community. This was especially needed as Christians were a very small minority in the dioceses and animators had to often reassure communities that development was not an exercise for conversion. Under Fr. Ajith Rohan, the societies formed by widows had been strengthened and they provided valuable services to enable these widows to learn skills and become the new breadwinners of the family. Human Rights awareness programmes too were often carried out, and peace education too had become a very important programme. Janasetha had, in keeping with youth needs commenced a skill training programme, providing youth with a certificate course in air-conditioning and house-wiring. It had also started skill training programmes for women, so that they were able to generate income for the development of their families by setting up self-employment projects. Credit and thrift societies too had come into operation due to the efforts of the animators.

The community groups themselves collected the Savings and disbursed the funds for the purposes needed by the members. These societies, which number over thirty one, were managed by office bearers chosen the community. Janasetha regularly held leadership programmes drawing into its orbit, persons of different religions who essentially believed that man must decide on his priorities of development and be assisted to obtain them. "Each class must be brought into conformity with the demands of the common good and social justice", appeared to be the working concept of Janasetha.

Their main on-going activities catered to the needs of the poorest of the poor in the district of Kurunegala, irrespective of caste, race or religion. They endeavored to promote peace and harmony among all categories of people and upgraded the living standards of the poor, suffering communities in the district through the various animation activities implemented by them for the spiritual, social and economic development of the communities. Kurunegala, being an agricultural area gave priority to the needs of the farmer community, for the promotion of sustainable agriculture in the area. Simultaneously, the widows of the JVP insurrection, women in distress, war victims and their families too, were assisted under the numerous other programmes such as housing, health, micro credit, scholarships and pre-school programmes. Their vision was to empower the people through animation and, in solidarity with them, in their efforts for Integral Human Development.

### 2008 - 2018

The Animation and Peace programmes were implemented to mobilize and strengthen the poor and marginalized communities in the dioceses of Kurunegala under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Ajith Fernando, who served as the Director of Janasetha until 2011. After analyzing the needs of the farming communities, Janasetha also started a programme titled, "Integral Human



**Fr. Sugath addressing WRDS members**



Development through Community Empowerment programme”, under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Sugath Jayamaha (2012 – 2014). The following four project objectives have been established to achieve the desired results.

1. To empower the entire community of each village in their social, economic and spiritual status
2. Promoting social justice and building sustainable peace
3. Community based disaster preparedness to mitigate the impact in terms of loss of human life and damage to properties and environment
4. Psychosocial support for emotional wellbeing restored

Selected communities were empowered Socially, Economically, Politically, Culturally and Spiritually. As the facilitation of the project a rice mill, a store and a community hall had been donated to Raddagoda area. Project implementation had conducted several programmes. As a result a number of beneficiaries have started their own self-employment schemes. Vocational Training programme was also carried out to help 30 students to follow courses of their choice in 2013-2014, to mould them to be skilful individuals.



**Distributing relief items during 2016 floods**

Many women in the poverty stricken families in Kurunegala have opted to migrate to Middle East countries to work as housekeepers. However, they seek unreliable and unsafe

means and fall prey to the racketeers. Caritas Luxemburg has funded to implement the Safe Migration Project in 2013 and have conducted awareness programmes for the government officials and prospective migrants.

SEDEC and Nedlar Organization funded the housing project for the homeless people in Kirimatiyana, Galgamuwa and Pellandeniya villages in 2016. Under this project more than 50 houses have been constructed.



**Sales outlet for products made by SHG members**

improve their food supply chain, especially by creating homestead organic gardens to maximize the family income and nutrition improvement.

The Diocese of Kurunegala was able to form a farmer federation comprised of 2000 farmers from 2013 to 2017, with the objective of achieving food security under a project funded by Caritas Norway and NORAD. The farmers were trained to

In 2014, unfortunately, Fr. Sugath Jayamaha met with his untimely death and Rev. Fr. Sagara Perera, was immediately appointed as Director of Janasetha. He started commemorating the World Food Day to raise awareness about the causes of hunger and the global efforts initiated to eradicate poverty.





## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

Due to the high prevalence of Thalassimia in the Kurunegala District, the National Thalassaemia Unit was established to prevent the spread of the disease. Caritas Janasetha was able to bring this detrimental disease to the forefront of the media and created a wider awareness through networking with the National Thalassaemia Unit. Another major ailment prevalent in Kurunegala is the Chronic Kidney Disease which has caused a number of deaths due to the unawareness of the public about the high Agro-Chemicals usage in agriculture.



**Religious Amity activity**

Under the 'Advocacy towards Healing and Reconciliation and Good Governance' project emphasis was given to various recommendations made by the LLRC to bring about ethnic amity and to re-establish the principals of good governance. Janasetha carried out numerous activities and organized exposure visits in and out of the diocese for the members of the Inter Religious Forums.

"Water Resource Management and Women's Empowerment" project implemented in 2013, was funded by CAFOD to ensure water availability and to empower vulnerable women in rural Sri Lanka. Under the project gender awareness, water management and capacity development programmes for women were conducted. 10 drinking water wells were also constructed in selected areas in Kurunegala.



In 2016, Rev. Fr. Jamika Perera was appointed as the Director of Janasetha and was able to give the leadership to the Humanitarian and Human Development activities. He was able to show the results of Food Security programme implemented in Kurunegala DC to Caritas Norway.

Caritas Slovenia supported 29 families with livelihood assistance programmes to start their own self-employment activities.

Poland Caritas Sri Lanka Scholarship Programme was established to assist students from vulnerable and marginalized families to pursue their studies. The project was renewed in June 2017, with a new group of 37 beneficiaries.

*"I know that you as young people have great aspirations, that you want to pledge yourselves to build a better world. Let others see this, let the world see it, since this is exactly the witness that the world expects from the disciples of Jesus Christ; in this way, and through your love above all, the world will be able to discover the star that we follow as believers."*

- Pope Benedict XVI



**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**



## Staff of Caritas Kurunegala- Janasetha



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Mannar - Valvuthayam**

Valvuthayam in Mannar has a large population of fisherman and hence animation and leadership training was provided for the fisherman to set up credit and thrift societies and assistance was given for the societies to obtain fishing equipment.

Both, the centres in Jaffna and Vanni too had specific programmes to help the orphans and refugee children destabilized by the ongoing conflict. However, Justice and Peace matters occupy much of the work of these two institutions, since they often work as co-ordinators between the security forces and the citizens. Training and animation with regard to human rights issues were provided by these two centres. In 2001, Fr. Jesurajah took over as Director. During his tenure he continued with the programmes but the tense situation in the area hampered much of the work. More often, issues pertaining to peace and justice were of great concern. In addition, with the intensification of military operations, there was a considerable amount of resettlement and relocation necessary of marginalized persons.



Fr. Peppi Sosai took over as Director in 2006 – 2008. He obtained assistance from Poland scholarship fund for about 80 students. Unfortunately, since the peace animators

had been threatened, peace animation programmes came to a standstill. However, animation programmes continued with projects such as, sustainable agriculture production, small group activity and micro finance method of thrift and credit societies.

In addition human right awareness and training programmes continued, though often they were subject to various problems for the participants and as such could not be carried out continuously. IDPs



**National Animation Programme**

gender sensitive programmes, relief and rehabilitation programs too continued. Special attention was given to programmes such as the prosthetic limb fitting centre which provided artificial limbs to those in need.

### **2008-2018**

Caritas Mannar –Valvuthayam has been providing humanitarian services for the most vulnerable people in the district of Mannar. Though many funding agencies have left the country due to various reasons, Caritas Mannar effectively and efficiently implements its projects through 11 projects that ensure a highest level of qualitative services for specifically targeted beneficiaries.

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Centre for Disabled (CFD) was inaugurated in January 1991, under the patronage of Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, then Bishop of Mannar, mainly to serve people who lost their hands and limbs during the war. Due to heavy shelling between LTTE and government forces, innocent civilians in the northern and eastern provinces became prey to the ethnic war.



**Fr. Jeyabalan at a house opening ceremony**

Valvuthayam as a Catholic Organization taking into account all risks and political threats had to discern a new path that should cater to the needs of that time. The main activities are prosthetic and orthotic services, patient follow up provision, repairs and replacement of devices, physiotherapy and counseling services. Up to now 3850 persons have benefited from this Centre with the funding assistance from Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

148 students affected by the war were assisted with educational payment and learning material. Simultaneously this project had assisted 111 vulnerable university students with monthly cash payments. In addition, 97 pre-schools are administered by Caritas Mannar.

In Madhu DS Division 1560 families from 19 villages are included under a Socio-Economic Empowerment project funded by

Stromme foundation in order to empower and uplift their living conditions.

In collaboration with government officials and respective community members, 19 CBOs have been formed to advocate for their rights and needs. 155 SHGs are formed to inculcate the saving habits especially among the returnees from India and 17 Children Circle Societies are formed to ensure child protection and creating a child friendly environment in the rural villages.



**Visit to IDP camps by CBCSL**

Under a project titled "Water Management and Women Empowerment", 20 villages in Mannar district were selected and 24 open dug wells were erected. The sole purpose of this activity is to ensure people, especially children, pregnant mothers and elders to have access to clean drinking water.

The Zero Poverty Project funded by Caritas Norway through Caritas Sri Lanka selected 3 villages and assisted in creating market linkage for the local products to be sold at a common market place. Main idea is to promote organic farming in the targeted villages. Thus, Valvuthayam provided seeds. These villages have now become model villages for organic farming.



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

Under the Religious Amity Project, villages of Alavakkai, Andankulam, Chettkulama and Vaddakandal were selected for the implementation of this project. Continuous mobilization and focused group discussions made it possible to form 4 Inter-Religious Forums (IRF). Religious Leaders, Inter-religious forum members and students are taken for different exposure visits to the Dioceses of Colombo, Kurunegala and Jaffna. Such visits stimulated in building relationships with other religious leaders and IRF members of other ethnicities.



**Livelihood support for IDPs**

This project to promote sustainable peace is implemented in 5 target villages, namely Palamerumalkaddu, Vannarkulam, Echchalavakkai, Sornanapuri and Umanahari where village level peace groups are formed. Sinhala language classes are organized for students and parents to help them to communicate with. Continuous monitoring are undertaken by field staff to ensure the project goals.

With the purpose of ensuring child Rights in the Mannar District, 2 villages namely Kannaddi and Kathankulam are selected. Children from these villages are encouraged to participate in personality development, Child rights and individual counseling sessions.



The Lebara Educational Project is implemented in 7 villages with the objective of promoting personality development of students. Trainings and skill development sessions are

provided. Special financial support is provided for scholarship students.

*Peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected. Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake. War begets war, violence begets violence.*

*-Pope Francis*



‘GOD’S LOVE FOR ALL’



## Staff of Caritas Mannar - Valvuthayam



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Ratnapura - Sethmini**

The Ratnapura diocesan centre Sethmini, came into being very recently since the diocese itself was established only in 1996. Earlier, the Ratnapura district belonged to the Galle diocese. In 1996, the new office was inaugurated. Taking into consideration the demands of the area, programmes were implemented specially in the fields of animation and leadership training.

The first Director Fr. Dudley Attanayake, intended to make animation provide for continuous growth. The animators would establish an entry point into the community whereby they would be accepted, and discuss with the people the issues of the community to find solutions. Sethmini, main focus placed on welfare and civic services. But the Director's main concern was to create community leadership so that there would be continuity in defining priorities and working towards decided goals. The people themselves would be the agents of change and the agents of their own development. The need for credit and thrift had been identified as a priority. Societies were established, where with counterpart funding and membership fees, loans could be made available to develop small scale projects.

As the province consisted of a number of marginalized villages as well as estate communities, the work undertaken by Sethmini had to take into consideration the diversity of the needs of these two factors. One common request was for pre-schools, and it was envisaged by the present Director Fr. Charles De Gaulle, to have a number of pre-schools in the villages and in the estates. In the

estates Sethmini hoped, by the setting up the reading rooms, to provide facilities for adult literacy and encourage discussions which would animate estate communities to identify their community needs.

However, dioceses with estate communities, often tie up with other diocesan centres having the same type of plantations to mobilize development in estate communities since



**Grade 5 scholarship programme**

often, their priorities and needs are similar. One common request was to rehabilitate drug and alcohol addicts in the estates and the villages. As such, Sethmini took leadership to open a rehabilitation centre for them. Sethmini also took a keen interest to establish programmes for differently abled children and youth under the Community based rehabilitation system. Life education programs for youth and children were very special and motivated change of attitudes and life styles in them to form a disciplined and active society with good leadership.

Rev. Fr. Charles, with assistance from Rev. Fr. Alexis Benedict who was specialized in the rehabilitation of drug and alcohol addicts, organized a ten day residential programme which was specifically geared to assist those in estates and in the marginalized sector. The Director had also designed a special programme for the

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disabled. So that they could integrate with the larger community. Sethmini was also involved in developing a nutrition programme for the estates and commenced programmes on health education and medical care.

## **2008-2018**

During the period 2009-2011, under the directorship of Rev. Fr. Charles De Gaulle, Caritas Ratnapura continued the mission to the marginalized and the neglected in the society. Prominence had been given to rehabilitate drug and alcohol addicts in the estates and the villages. Special programmes were implemented for the benefit of differently abled children and youth under a community based rehabilitation system. Life education programme for children and youth were conducted to motivate their attitudes and lifestyles. Sethmini work was further spread to the suburb villages and plantation communities through the community empowerment initiatives of the Integral Human Development (IHDP) project.

In 2011 Rev. Fr. Texie Dissanayaka was appointed director and he continued in this position till August 2014. The activities of IHD were accelerated by effectively empowering the poorest and the marginalized communities, to improve their socio, economic, psychosocial and spiritual conditions, especially by capacitating and organizing the communities while applying advocacy and lobbying as tools. A sustainable peace project to bring healing and reconciliation among ethnic and religious communities was put into operation by linking a Tamil speaking village in Mannar

diocese with that of a Sinhala speaking village in Ratnapura.

The project on Safe Migration created awareness of human trafficking among estate and rural communities and also among government officials. Monthly grants were given by Poland to 60 students selected from low income families irrespective of their religion or race. Empowerment of the Green Gold Harvesters (GGH) project that uplifted the life standards of the plantation communities was implemented in Matuwagala Estate by empowering and organizing the community to form small groups. Vigilant committees to build up cordial relationships between the government sector and the estate management to obtain their services were conducted on regular basis. A Civic Dialogue and Cross Community Activities commenced in July 2013. This project improved the capacities and encouraged the beneficiaries stand on their own in the future. This helped Sethmini to reach out to 40 groups in whole of Sabaragamuwa province.

Rev. Fr. Anton Sriyan, the present director commenced his service in August 2014. Under his abled leadership, various activities including community empowerment programme aiming the estate communities, organic home gardens, livestock development, inter-ethnic and religious dialogues were organized by Sethmini. These activities were instrumental in empowering



**Fr. Sriyan helping with the flood relief distribution**



## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

people since they also contributed with their labour for the successful implementation of these activities. Community leaders were capacitated with training programmes conducted both at diocesan and national level.

Unfortunately for Ratnapura, weather conditions changed rapidly and by May 2016 through May 2017,

Kegalle district was severely affected and in 2017 Ratnapura district sustained heavy damages due to changing weather conditions. Sethmini assisted more than 7000 families with the help of the other unaffected diocesan centres. Sethmini is grateful to Caritas Sri Lanka and member organizations of Caritas Internationalis for the enormous support extended to people. The support included food, sanitary kits and support to education.

In 2016, families numbering 7056 were affected by the landslides in Aranayake. Caritas provided 16 landslide affected families with assistance to build their houses. Poland scholarship grants have been given to 37 students and will continue till June 2019: another 65 students affected by floods and landslides selected from low income families have been granted monthly scholarships



**During 2016 floods & landslides**

which will continue till 2018.

The main objective of Sethmini is to bring God's love to the most neglected sector of society. We remember with gratitude the dedicated directors, staff members and community leaders who have contributed immensely to realize this prime objective of Sethmini.



*"Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, ongoing away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act- they will be blessed in their doing,"*

- St. James

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‘GOD’S LOVE FOR ALL’



## Staff of Caritas Ratnapura - Sethmini



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Caritas Trincomalee - EHED**

EHED Trincomalee had always, from its inception, come forward to assist people in times of conflicts and disaster. The tsunami disaster was one such instance where EHED, under the guidance and inspiration of Rev. Fr. Francis X. Dias, Diocesan Director since 2003 and CSL-SEDEC responded immediately to this devastating tragedy by providing shelter, health care and psychosocial assistance, food, and financial aid to the victims, with the assistance of its own staff and experts from abroad.



**Rev. Fr. Francis X. Dias**

Dealing with this disaster had brought in new dimensions to the ongoing work of EHED Trincomalee. Staff had been trained and new staff contracted to provide for the needs of

the affected communities. One of the most important needs was shelter, since the tsunami had destroyed almost all the houses in the coastline areas. The Housing Project began with temporary shelters, 342 such shelters were set up and a transit camp established for immediate occupation. 504 permanent houses had been successfully completed in Trincomalee town and Gravets, Kuchchaveli, and in Kinniya Divisions.

With the building of these houses the project had also taken in other aspects to provide for the wellbeing of the communities.

Community centres have been established, pre-schools set up, roads and infrastructural facilities such as drainage and water schemes too have been implemented.

Economic recovery activity was another dimension that was urgently needed in view of the tsunami disaster. Under Livelihood Project, 12 Livelihood Development Societies were formed to give vocational training, technical training, capacity building activities and income generation programmes to the affected. Asset Restoration had been provided under the EHED Livelihood activities. Home gardening and the preparation of natural fertilizer in several villages had led to the practice of waste management by preparing compost fertilizer.



**EHED livelihood support programme**

Educational assistance too is provided both to those affected by the conflict and the tsunami. 60 pre-schools have been established and 33 evening class centres set up for vulnerable children, monthly financial aid was given for 200 students, and provision of stationery to 62 pre-schools and 30 evening class centres in Town and the Gravets, Muthur, and Kinniya divisions. Training for the teachers in all categories and awareness raising for parents were special concerns designed to uplift the performance level of the children.

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Community mobilization was done through the National Animation Programme. A federation containing 110 numbers of Animation groups had been functioning with 950 members. While dealing with the devastation caused by the tsunami, another matter of concern, was the conflict and its consequences. Peace building among Sinhala and Tamil communities and Human Rights Awareness programmes to the community through a Peace Programme, were one of the important initiatives taken by EHED Trincomalee.

Caritas Trincomalee - EHED sought to convey the message of peace to the community through awareness programmes for women, youth, and children from peace societies. Health and psychosocial assistance for the recovery of the people from the mental affects of the Tsunami tragedy were activities carried out by different units of the Caritas Trincomalee - EHED. A psychosocial team of EHED Caritas, with the support of psychiatrists, had been actively interacting with the children and adults in the affected areas since the disaster struck.



**Team Discussion with Animators**

Caritas Trincomalee - EHED also educated and assisted the villagers in basic health care to promote hygienic practices, healthy nutrition intake, and waste management. Awareness programmes

on the immunization to pregnant women, infants and children below 12 years of age, were conducted and emphasis laid on the importance of attending clinics regularly. Trained Health volunteers and psychosocial workers had been using art therapy, games, and experience sharing to help the children and adults recover from their trauma. They were also encouraged to channel their talents in story-telling, poetry writing and drawing. Stimulating the minds of the children helped them to shift their focus from their recent trauma.



**Konesapuri housing scheme**

EHED's volunteer service had grown into a remarkable team with 4 psychosocial workers and 60 psychosocial service providers on one hand and on the other 15 health supervisors, 105 health volunteers and 300 health committee members rendering fruitful service at their best to the affected ones. EHED had treated 143 persons of mental disorder with the support of the Mental Health Unit of the Base Hospital, Trincomalee, and 1,176 who were suffering from mental stress were treated through counseling by our psychosocial team. 39 psychosocial workers had been trained





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and 48 psychosocial workers were trained with the support of the Mental Health Unit.

### 2008-2018

From 2010 – 2013 Caritas Trincomalee – EHED implemented the IHDTC programme to address 4 specific strategic priorities as stated below:

1. Enhancing Integral Human Development through Community Empowerment
2. Promoting Social Justice and building Sustainable Peace
3. Community Based Disaster Management and Emergency Response
4. Organizational /Institutional Strengthening

EHED initially selected 20 villages to carry out this programme and formed small groups and CBOs. Through the community empowerment mostly the women got involved in the development activities. To enhance their household income, micro loans were granted whereby they engaged in home gardening, vegetable production and other income generation activities.



At the end of the war in 2009, the resettlement of the war affected families were taken up by EHED and 232 houses were constructed.

No	Village	Year	Number of houses	Donors
01	Nallur	2010	67	Caritas Belgium
02	Illakkanthai	2011	40	SEDEC fund
03	Illakkanthai	2013	14	Caritas Swiss
04	Vaddam	2013	14	Caritas Swiss
05	Ilakkanthai	2014	10	Caritas Swiss
06	Neenakerni	2014	34	Caritas Spain
07	Illakkanthai	2016	07	Caritas Swiss
08	Neenakerni	2016	44	Caritas Swiss
09	Sinnakulam		09	Caritas Korea
			239	

A community empowerment Project under the name, IHD was implemented during the years 2013 to 2015 in 07 villages in Muthur, Trincomalee T&G and Thampalagamam Divisions. EHED conducted regular meetings and awareness sessions on empowerment process. A soft loan scheme was also introduced under this project to enhance their economic activities. Small groups were formed and there was one CBO in each village. Mostly the women became members of these SHGs and the CBOs.

The project “Community Organizing, Livelihood and Resilience of Rural Women” was implemented in the year 2016 and 2017 in two villages in the Muthur division namely, Sampukali and Kadakaraichenai funded by CAFOD. The project intended to bring about specific changes among the Women Rural Development Societies (WRDS) in both villages. The activities were carried out with the objective

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of strengthening and empowering the WRDS members to improve their standard of living by participating more actively in local government issues to demand for their rights. A micro loan system was created and the recovered funds revolved within the society and managed with the consensus of the WRDS members.

The Peace and Reconciliation project was implemented in 04 villages namely Iruthaypuram, Paddithidal, Sinnakulam in Muthur Division and Mahaveligama in Serunuwara Division. Apart from other activities, the peace committee members were taken on exposure visits to other districts like Anuradhapura, Kurunagala and Ratnapura where these members were given an opportunity to mingle with similar peace committee members from other villages. EHED also celebrated different religious festivals where all the peace committee members of the 04 villages gathered together.



**Rev. Fr. Nithidasan**

Child Protection Programme was carried out in 05 GN divisions in the Sampoor resettled villages where Children's Clubs were formed and leadership training sessions were

conducted with the objective of enhancing their sports activities. VCDCs are formed in all the 05 GN divisions to look into the

child abuse, school drop outs and other child related issues with the help and cooperation of the Probation Department and the Women and Child desk of the Police.

A group of 37 students from marginalized and poor families, studying in A/L classes and universities have been provided with financial support for their studies. EHED held monthly meetings for the parents and children to assess their progress.

*"You will listen O Lord to the prayers of the lowly; you will give them courage. You will hear the cries of the oppressed and the orphans: you will judge in their favour so that mortal men may cause terror no more".*

- Psalm 10





'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

## Staff of Caritas Trincomalee - EHED



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## **Caritas Vanni - HUDEC**



Human development Centre Caritas Vanni- HUDEC is the social arm of the Catholic Church of the Jaffna diocese. Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin B. Gnanapragasam, the Bishop of Jaffna is the Chairman of the organization.

With the continuing war, more resettlement of IDPs took place in Vanni but the internal conflict in the Jaffna peninsula and surrounding areas became more intensive. Hostilities broke out again and once more there was a mass exodus took place from Jaffna to Vanni. When people flock into Vanni from Jaffna in 1995, school going children were deprived of their nutritive diet. In order to help them the late Rev. Fr. Hilary Jebanesan who was the director of HUDEC Jaffna commenced a porridge programme for pre-school and school going children. This project supported 18,000 pre-school and school going children from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu.



**A discussion with Peace Community members**

With the administrative changes that were taking place with the LTTE, HUDEC Vanni was established in 2010 June 14th, with directors appointed by the Bishop of Jaffna and successors of the late Fr. Hilary

Jebanesan, Rev. Fr. J.B Antony, Rev. Fr. Soosaitathan, Rev. Fr.

Roy Ferdinand, Rev. Fr. G. Peter, Rev. Fr. Vasanthaseelan, Rev. Fr. Canisas Raj, Rev. Fr. Yavis, Rev. Fr. Dayaharan and Rev. Fr. J. Francis (Present director) were appointed to serve in the Vanni district.

In July 2008, a notification was issued by the government of Sri Lanka that NGOs would no longer be allowed to continue their humanitarian work in Vanni and were requested by the government to evacuate immediately. Except for 2 humanitarian organizations HUDEC and ICRC opted to work for war victims.



In January 2009, the physical structure of HUDEC was completely demolished and this created a great shock to the people who had obtained temporary shelters in lands operated by

HUDEC. In May 2009, the war came to an end and the survivors were placed in IDP camps located in Cheddikulam and Manik farm. In 2010 resettlement was started by the government with international support. The affected people were resettled in their original places but were compelled to start their life from the beginning. Many of the people who were resettled found it difficult to obtain their identity cards, proper ownership certificates etc., and this led to a lot of confusion.



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In 2010 and 2011, under the CRS-1420 project 1000, livelihood packages were distributed and 700 temporary houses were given at Kandavai divisional secretariat in Kilinochchi. Livelihood packages were also provided to widows in Poonegaray divisional secretariat in Kilinochchi district.

In January 2015, 26 new houses and 9 houses were renovated and provided by Caritas Sweden. In 2013, project titled, 'Rehabilitation and Reconstruction' provided 20 new houses to people under a project funded by Caritas Sweden. 115 of war victims were benefitted with livelihood packages from a programme funded by Caritas Korea.

In 2011 to 2015, Caritas Switzerland built permanent core houses and livelihood support to the war affected and resettled families in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. Under this project 300 families received permanent core houses, and 66 houses were repaired. 70 livelihood packages distributed and 50 vocational trainings courses were offered under a project titled "Reconstruction of Permanent Core Houses and Livelihood Support" in Kilinochchi. In addition, 125 war affected families received livelihood packages while 3 community Halls were constructed and 115 vocational training centers were established



with the assistance from Caritas Switzerland.

Unfortunately, the resettled people went through untold difficulties without proper housing facilities. The special project called "Resettlement of IDPs affected by the war," funded by Misereor was implemented at Uddiyarkaddu in Mullaitivu from 2013 to 2015. Under this project, 335 families received livelihood assistance with capacity building training and 50 families got permanent houses.



**Renovation and construction of pre-schools by ACNS Netherlands**

In 2012 January, Caritas Sri Lanka launched a 3 year project called 'Integral Human Development through Community Empowerment' by which vulnerable communities were empowered and formed into 18 CBOs and supported with revolving loans to 288 members in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. From 2010 to 2015 with the support of Caritas Italiana, Caritas Poland and ACNS-Netherlands, a special educational programme was implemented for pre-school orphan and semi-orphan children. Another children's programme was funded by Caritas Italiana from December 2010 to January 2014, in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, and 296 children benefited from a Scholarship programme funded by Caritas Poland. In 2010, ACNS Netherlands funded a Renovation and Construction of pre-schools in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts.

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Due to the 30 year war, ethnic groups in Sri Lanka experienced hostility and destructions in their day to day living. In 2012 Caritas Australia and Misereor offered a joint project titled, "Promoting Healing and Reconciliation" in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, for those who had lost their documentary proof of land ownership and temporary identity cards. Under an project named "Strengthening Democracy" 109 vote awareness programmes were carried out. In 2012, 140 school children and 160 women were empowered on human rights and women's rights in both districts.

The Programme titled 'Fostering Human Rights' by CARDAID was established and Missio supported HUDEC by a project called 'Psychosocial Support' targeting school going children, teachers, families and people with mental disorders. More than 500 children and adults benefited from this project.

Misereor in August 2015, funded a project on resettlement of IDPs and 244 war affected families received livelihood assistance. 108 houses were renovated, 4 new houses and 3 Community halls were built and 8 capacity building programmes were conducted.

In February 2016, Caritas Switzerland offered a project on reconstruction of permanent core houses and livelihood support to the war affected resettled families at Muruthankerny in Jaffna district. 26 IDP families received new houses. In February 2017, Rev. Fr. J. Francis who succeeded Rev. Fr. M.L. Thayaharan assumed the post of director HUDEC Vanni and continued his service to help the war affected people in the Vanni region.

After the 30 years of civil war government appointed an independent commission called "Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission" in May 2010, to investigate the facts and circumstances which led to the failure of ceasefire agreement and the war at large. The Commission published a book with recommendations for building peace and reconciliation in the country.



In September 2014, Caritas Norway funded a project with the objective of Creating Religious amity. The main themes of this project are promotion of reconciliation,

dialogue among ethnic groups and protection of religious and ethnic minorities.

During the period of July 2017 to August 2018, the sustainable livelihood development project was implemented. HUDEC Vanni has mobilized grass- root level communities into small self-help groups.

Since 2010, Caritas Vanni-HUDEC has involved itself in many empowerment programmes targeting the grass-root level communities in both districts. As a result more than 30 CBOs consisting of 110 SHGs have been formed. These groups have been monitored for almost 10 years by the HUDEC Vanni staff.





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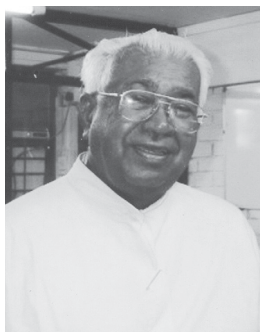
## Staff of Caritas Vanni - HUDEC



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**'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'**

## **Directors of Caritas Sri Lanka**



**Rev. Fr. Joe Fernando**  
1968-1980



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando**  
1980-1983



**Rev. Fr. Vincent Dep**  
1983-1986



**Rev. Fr. Peter Charles**  
1986-1990



**Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando OMI**  
1990-1991



**Rev. Fr. Oswald B. Firth OMI**  
1991-1995



**Rev. Fr. J. B Devarajah**  
1995-2001



**Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando**  
2001-2009



**Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney**  
2010-2016



**Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Weliwita**  
2016- June 2017



**Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke**  
2017 to Date

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## **Appendix**

### **DIRECTORS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Directors</b>
1968-1980	Rev. Fr. Joe Fernando
1980-1983	Msgr. Vianney Fernando
1983-1986	Rev. Fr. Vincent Dep
1986-1990	Rev. Fr. Peter Charles
1990-1991	Rev. Fr. Camillus Fernando
1991-1995	Rev. Fr. Oswald B. Firth
1995-2001	Rev. Fr. J. B Devarajah
2001-2009	Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando
2010-2016	Rev. Fr. George Sigamoney
2016-2017	Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Weliwita
2017 to Date	Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke

### **CHAIRMEN & VICE-CHAIRMEN**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Vice-Chairman</b>
From 1968	Thomas Cardinal Cooray OMI	-
	Bishop Anthony de Saram	-
	Bishop Leo Nanayakkara	-
	Bishop Vianney Fernando	-
1992-1995	Bishop Raymond Peiris	Bishop Kingsley Swampillai
1995-1998	Bishop Malcolm Ranjith	Bishop Rayappu Joseph
1998-2001	Bishop Malcolm Ranjith	Bishop Rayappu Joseph
2001-2004	Bishop Vianney Fernando	Bishop Rayappu Joseph
2004-2007	Bishop Raymond Peiris	Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam
2007-2013	Bishop Harold Anthony Perera	Bishop Kingsley Swampillai
2013 to Date	Bishop Vianney Fernando	Bishop Justin B. Gnanapragasam

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# 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

## TIMELINE



YEAR	DESCRIPTION
1949	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a very simple manner Fr. Joe Fernando started a Co-operative Fisherman's association at Sea Street.</li> </ul>
1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Joe was granted the privilege by Thomas Cardinal Cooray to visit the Codi University in Canada and learn the methodology of setting up more comprehensive fisherman's cooperatives.</li> <li>Later that year at a meeting in Rome, it was suggested to Fr. Joe by Fr. James Morris, assistant to Catholic Relief Services, that a relief service be established in Sri Lanka to provide and facilitate development. Fr. Lucian Schmidt OMI, then Vicar General in Colombo suggested that the sea Street experience be expanded to cover the whole island. His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray who was in Rome at that time suggested that it was opportune to establish an Institute for Social Development in Sri Lanka which would work not only at diocesan level, but become national and reach out to all sectors of the community. The outcome of this discussion was what eventually led to the institutionalization.</li> </ul>
1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Joe was given the task by His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Cooray of establishing SEDEC, his main concept on the working of the organization was based on Populorum Progressio.</li> </ul>
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Janasaviya in the Chilaw Diocese commenced in the 1969 and its inception was instrumental in working out priorities for animation and leadership training.</li> <li>Kantha Samithis came into being</li> </ul>
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEDEC moved its office to 45, Kynsey road (the present social Communications Centre) and had on its staff, only the late Sr. Irene Seneviratne and Marie Fernando, who fortunately for SEDEC remained in its service till 1996.</li> </ul>
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Devarajah, on a request made by the Bishop of Jaffna, had started a mission in the islands in Jaffna where a very marginalized community of fishermen lived. He was the first indigenous priest to bring them into the main stream of development. He began an integrated development programme for the people of Irnaitivu.</li> </ul>
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caritas HUDEC- Jaffna was set up by Rev. Fr. Devarajah</li> </ul>
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structurally, SEDEC underwent another change. "At the time of its founding, SEDEC found itself endowed by the Episcopal conference, with an administrative council whose members, chosen by the Episcopacy were all either functionaries or persons pertaining to the business and financial milieu.</li> <li>Fr. Lucian Schmidt was appointed to be in charge of the administration.</li> </ul>
1973-1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A period of intense activity, 68% of all projects, 75% of the economic type, 60% of education and 63% of the services were financed and put into operation during this period. This growth was not due only to the results of the reorganization of SEDEC and the diversification of its activities.</li> </ul>

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## 'GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL'

YEAR	DESCRIPTION
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Father Schmitt left Sri Lanka to head the Asian Desk at Missio in Germany. The organization continued the programme of animation. In addition to the specific projects SEDEC was now handling emergency relief measures too and continued as and when occasion demanded, such as providing flood relief assistance. However it was apparent that a strong structural administrative basis needed to be established especially, since SEDEC was regarded by many of the funding agencies as the organization that could effectively channel their funds and provide evaluation.</li> </ul>
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the first time, a layman Basil Ilangakoon, came into SEDEC as an Administrator. SEDEC, by this time, had been accepted by the major funding agencies of Europe as the chief agency for channeling funds. Bishop Anthony De Saram was in charge of the Commission for Justice and Peace but he left it to Basil Ilangakoon to formulate the guidelines of SEDEC and its networking capacity, both as a national centre and as a link centre for the Dioceses in order to strengthen the development of SEDEC.</li> </ul>
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a centre in Badulla, Caritas Badulla- USCOD</li> </ul>
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Devarajah took over the rehabilitation of the refugees and displaced persons and resettlement in the Diocese of Jaffna.</li> </ul>
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cyclone in the Eastern Province and its devastating repercussions on the people of that area gave SEDEC a different opportunity to expand on its objectives. SEDEC team worked in the cyclone-affected area. A cyclone rehabilitation centre and project Piyasa was set up, the main concept here too was a programme of rehabilitation based on development. The rehabilitation centre concentrated on the animation and education of community leaders to decide on their own priorities with regard to rehabilitation and development. In this process peoples from all creeds, castes and communities leveled by disaster to a common entity, worked united to seek sustainable programmes.</li> </ul>
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Joe Fernando was released to take up work at Caritas Internationalis as the desk officer in-charge of Asia. In the SEDEC office a change had occurred with Basil Ilangakoon leaving and Fr. Vianney Fernando, present Bishop taking over as 2nd Director in 1981.</li> </ul>
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Diocese of Jaffna was divided and a new Diocese that of Mannar came into being and Caritas Mannar-Valvuthayam was established.</li> </ul>
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bishop Vianney took over as Bishop of Kandy, Fr. Vincent Dep was appointed Director of SEDEC. His main concern was in developing the Janasaviya concept or people's self-help groups. Fr. Dep believed that credit and thrift societies could provide the necessary funding. Hence dependence on foreign funding alone was not an essential component for development. Grass-root development could take place through the medium of credit and thrift societies.</li> </ul>
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The emergency desk came into prominence to deal with the immediate problems of displaced persons</li> </ul>
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first director of Caritas SED Galle Rev. Fr. Dudley Attanayake was appointed</li> </ul>

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## ‘GOD’S LOVE FOR ALL’



YEAR	DESCRIPTION
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Peter Charles was appointed Director SEDEC. He too emphasized that integral human development was an essential feature of SEDEC in order to implement and sustain the vision of SEDEC. He concentrated on the choice of animators.</li> <li>Set up Caritas Colombo- Seth Sarana</li> </ul>
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up Caritas Kurunegala- Janasetha</li> </ul>
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mannar had 23 Fisheries co-operative unions affiliated to the fisheries department</li> </ul>
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fr. Camillus took over. His term was extremely short as he took over as Provincial of the OMI in 1991.</li> </ul>
1991-1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rev. Fr. Oswald B. Firth took over as Director</li> <li>The JVP insurgency and the troubled conditions created violence and instability. SEDEC, in view of its commitment to the integral development of man, took on those issues that were now in the forefront of concerns and commenced a series of new ventures. Hence projects were started for the victims of the southern violence. SEDEC helped families affected by the insurgency where, often, the breadwinner was either killed or missing and the wife and children had to fend for themselves. Within the existing climate of suspicion and fear, there were few who were able to assist them, SEDEC stepped in with a programme to help such victims.</li> <li>SEDEC it was thought necessary to develop links with other Non.-Governmental organizations, both Christian and non- Christian. A peace march was organized. SEDEC, at this time, was instrumental in assisting the establishment and growth of the National Peace Council.</li> <li>In the same context, while this concentration was directed towards peace initiatives, other issues too affecting the people such as the Kandalama Hotel project and the Iranawila VOA station were taken up.</li> <li>A shift in development objectives too took place. It was noted that the realized projects created islands of prosperity but did not provide the necessary animation for integral development of all within a community. Hence the programme approach was emphasized with greater concentration on animation training for strategic planning. The assistance of APHD was obtained for this.</li> <li>Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC was one of the pioneer organizations to initiate the establishment of Consortium of Humanitarian Organizations (CHA) with few other NGOs to response collectively to help the war victims</li> </ul>
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bishop Malcolm Ranjith was appointed Chairman of the Catholic National commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development. He emphasized the role of National SEDEC.</li> <li>Organisation of a religious alliance was born.</li> <li>SEDEC entered the third millennium.</li> <li>Fr. Joseph Benedict Devarajah who had been very closely associated with SEDEC and had been involved with the rehabilitation work in the troubled areas was appointed Director. He brought with him, to the national SEDEC, the idealism that had sustained that vision when he had been in charge of the formation and growth of HUDEC-Jaffna.</li> </ul>

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YEAR	DESCRIPTION
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rathnapura Diocesan Centre came into being since the Diocese itself was established only in 1996.</li> </ul>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rev. Fr. Damian Fernando took over as Director – making SEDEC the instrument of the integral development.</li> </ul>
2002-2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bishop Vianney Fernando was functioning as Chairman of the Catholic National commission for Peace, Justice and Human Development.</li> </ul>
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National SEDEC coordinates work of the Diocesan Centres in providing flood relief and rehabilitation assistance.</li> <li>Bishop Raymond’s appointment as Chairman of the Catholic National commission for Peace, Justice and Human Development.</li> </ul>
2004 Dec. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Tsunami devastation</li> <li>Setting up of the Tsunami Task Force</li> </ul>
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting of the Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme</li> </ul>
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of General Policies for procurement, financial and general management</li> </ul>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bishop Harlod was appointed as Chairman of the Catholic National commission for Peace, Justice and Human Development.</li> <li>Tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction work continued</li> <li>International peace forum of Caritas Internationalis was held in Colombo</li> </ul>
March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APHD concludes its operations with Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC</li> </ul>
Sep. 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic plan for the next 8 years for Caritas Sri Lanka is drafted through an organizational development process</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proclamation of the 40th Anniversary with the planting of a mango sapling</li> <li>Caritas works for the north and east war victims and enters into dialogue with different parties for peace.</li> <li>Caritas Anuradhapura- Sethsaviya established</li> </ul>
2-3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec. 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40th Anniversary trade fair and exhibition</li> </ul>
4 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40th Anniversary celebration of Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC</li> </ul>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Official closure of the Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme</li> </ul>
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caritas Vanni- HUDEC was established</li> </ul>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trincomalee and Batticaloa were separated into two separate Dioceses.</li> </ul>
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment of Bishop Vianney as Chairman of the Catholic National commission for Peace, Justice and Human Development.</li> <li>Asia Regional farmer conference was held in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka</li> </ul>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of Strategic Plan for the period of 2015-2018</li> <li>Introduction of Caritas Internationalis Management standards</li> </ul>

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## ‘GOD’S LOVE FOR ALL’



2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closure of IDP Programme</li> <li>• Flood Relief in January 2015 under the START –UK intervention for 1750 families in the Dioceses of Anuradhapura, Batticaloa and Trincomalee.</li> </ul>
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev. Fr. Shanthi Kumar Weliwita took over as the National Director</li> <li>• Gained START Membership with a support of CAFOD</li> <li>• Flood Relief in May 2016. Assistance was given to 7,164 families affected by floods in the 9 Dioceses.</li> </ul>
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke took over as the National Director in June 2017</li> <li>• Flood Relief in May 2017, with an emergency appeal to Caritas Internationalis CSL was able to obtain the support of 8 Caritas member organizations to provide essential relief items for 5,481 families in the Dioceses of Galle, Rathnapura and Colombo.</li> <li>• Declaration of the Golden Jubilee in November 2017 on the theme “God’s Love for all”</li> <li>• Launching of the Strategic Plan for the year 2018 – 2021</li> </ul>
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All island debate competition for school going children in July 2018</li> <li>• Celebration of Caritas Family Day at the Diocesan Level</li> <li>• Mega Beach Clean-up campaign in September 2018, covering a distance of 34 Kms from Palliyawatte to Poruthota</li> <li>• Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC on 29th November 2018</li> </ul>

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***“ A mission is possible only with commitment accompanied by knowledge, experience and best techniques being deployed.”***

Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- ◆ With pleasure we avail of this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to:
  - Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Asia and other Caritas Partners for their contribution and accompaniment,
  - The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka and the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development being the 'Driving Force' behind all programmes and activities of Caritas Sri Lanka,
  - The Government of Sri Lanka for their cooperation and support,
- ◆ We also wish to acknowledge the yeoman services rendered by the past National Directors, both past and present Diocesan Directors and staff, the past and present National Centre staff and their commitment and dedication to service.
- ◆ Our beneficiary partners who have been with Caritas Sri Lanka-SEDEC for 50 long years accepting and showcasing immense commitment.

Special Thanks .....

Mrs. Manel Abayaratne, Mr. Sajith Silva, Mrs. Malar Raviendran, Mr. Terrance Codipili, Ms. Manohari Samaranayake, Mr. Freddie Jayawardane, Ms. Letitia de Silva, Ms. Dharshika, Mr. Chaminda Perera & Mr. Yasas S. Suriyabandara