



Nine Years of

Nonviolent Peaceforce

in Sri Lanka

Lessons Learned in Implementing Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping

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Acronyms

ABCD = Asset-Based Community Development
 CBO = Civil society-based organization
 CD = Country Director
 CHRDR - Centre for Human Rights & Development
 CRT = Colombo Response Team
 EPDP = Eelam Peoples Democratic Party
 ERN = Emergency Response Network
 FTM = Field Team Members
 GA = Government Agent
 GBV = Gender-based violence
 GOSL = Government of Sri Lanka.
 HFO = Head of Office
 HRD = Human Rights Defender(s)
 ICP = International Civilian Peacekeeper
 ICRC = International Committee of the Red Cross
 IDP = Internally displaced person
 IGC = International Governing Council (of NP)
 INGO = International Nongovernmental Organization
 IPKF = Indian Peace-Keeping Force
 ISC = International Steering Committee (of NP)
 ISGA = Interim Self Governing Authority (of the Tamil Tigers)
 JD = Job description
 JHU = National Heritage Party (party of Buddhist monks)
 JVP = Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or People's Liberation Front
 LTTE = Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
 MCRWA = Ministry for Child Rights and Women's Affairs
 MFC = Mission Fulfilment Committee
 MO = Member Organization (of NP)
 MoU = Memorandum of Understanding
 MSC = Most Significant Change
 NCP = National Civilian Peacekeeper
 NCPA = National Child Protection Authority
 NGO = Nongovernmental organization
 NP = Nonviolent Peaceforce
 PBI = Peace Brigades International
 O.V.I. = Objective verifiable Indicator
 PC = Program Committee
 PCM = Project Cycle Management
 PD = Project Director
 RPPB = Rapid Deployment Peace Brigade (of Sarvodaya)
 SLAF = Sri Lankan Armed Forces

SLFP = Sri Lanka Freedom Party

SLMM = Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission

SLMT = Sri Lanka Management Team

SOP = Standard Operating Procedure

S.O.V. = Sources of Verification

TC = Team Coordinator

TNA = Tamil National Alliance (LTTE presenting party in parliament)

TOR = Terms of Reference

UCP = Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping

UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF = United Nation Children's Fund

UNP = United National Party

ZOPP = Objectives-oriented project planning

Executive summary

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is a young INGO that deploys unarmed civilian staff to conflict zones to reduce violence and protect civilians. Founded in 2002, the project in Sri Lanka that lasted from 2003 to end of 2011 was its pilot project. This study here intends to sketch the history of this project, discuss the outcomes and impact NP's work in Sri Lanka had, describe the learning processes that NP underwent, and draw some lessons and conclusions which hopefully may serve to further develop the tool of unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCP) which is what NP calls its approach. The base of the study are mostly external and internal reviews and evaluations undertaken over the years, internal reports and minutes of meetings and interviews with many of those who steered the Sri Lankan project at one period or the other.

Arriving in Sri Lanka during the period of an interim cease-fire in the war between the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the the *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* (LTTE) in the middle of 2003, NP started out with a team of eleven field team members placed in four districts in the South, North and East of Sri Lanka and supported by four management and admin staff in Colombo. It grew to a maximum size of more than 80 international and national staff placed in a maximum of six field sites in the second half of the past decade. After the war that ended in May of 2009 NP intended to stay on to deal with on-going issues of protection in the post-war peacebuilding phase. But eventually NP had to leave by the end of 2011 when it became clear that it would – due to government regulations - not succeed to replace outgoing expat staff with sufficient new numbers of internationals, while at the same time the security situation did not allow to continue NP as a purely Sri Lankan-staffed organization.

Activities

NP had seven main areas of activities or programs:

- Child soldiers: Protection of children from being abducted, forced or conscripted into military service, helping parents to get their children back, accompaniment and finding safe places for children, support for reintegration of former child soldiers.
- IDP protection.
- Facilitation of dialogue and cooperation to prevent or mitigate inter- and intra-community conflicts in the East.
- Support and capacity-building in regard to early warning systems at the grassroots level.
- Protection and capacity-building of human rights defenders and other civil society activists.
- Capacity-building for communities in techniques of violence prevention.
- Protective accompaniment and capacity building for national election monitors during election times.

If one wants summarize the various activities and tools undertaken by NP throughout the years without going into too many of the details of the particular times and situations – which also varied from field site to field site – one comes to the following list:

- Proactive presence in communities, regular visits to various communities.
- Proactive presence at events like festivals, nonviolent actions etc.
- Monitoring of situations and places, for example IDP camps.
- Fast response to incidents or signs of early warning, by contacting actors, passing messages, bringing them together (facilitate dialogue).
- Protective accompaniment of activists and citizens while travelling and during critical visits.
- Fact finding (e.g. for rumour control).
- Offer safe space for meetings of local groups (CBOs).

- Refer people to other agencies, authorities and (sometimes) Embassies.
- Follow-up on cases by contacting authorities, agencies etc; work with authorities and agencies on re-integration of child soldiers, help people to get legal documentation (passports).
- Raise and address issues with other actors (e.g. how to deal with former child soldiers).
- ‘Strategic support’, discussion of approaches with activists, help groups to set up systems of early warning.
- Relationship-building with multiple actors, primarily at grassroots and middle level of society.
- Networking at various levels - between CBOs, NGOs, individual civil society leaders, authorities, large governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- Facilitating, nurturing and strengthening individuals’ and communities’ (community support networks) capacity and confidence to access services and democratic mechanisms and institutions (police processes, Human Rights Commissions, other protective services, etc.), and encouragement for those institutions to be responsive and accountable.
- Facilitate funding for beneficiaries.
- Being based in vulnerable communities (often as the only INGO), through knowledge gathered in the course of other activities, and /or extra visits / patrols, serving as eyes and ears for other agencies (SLMM, UNICEF and UNHCR, INGOs).
- Trainings (capacity-building in: documentation and advocacy skills; community protection skills).

Outcomes and impact

NP did not directly address the issue of the war between GOSL and the LTTE, and had no measurable impact in regard to it. What it did do was to deal with threats to civilians and to civil society activists in areas mostly under government control – since access to LTTE-held territory was impossible for most of the time – which were caused by the war and by secondary conflict lines like those between Muslim and Tamil populations in the East.

Much of NP’s work must be classified as a humanitarian effort, protecting the human rights, contributing to securing the physical and mental well-being and in many cases certainly saving the lives of individuals. Repeatedly it is reported that people felt safer because NP was around, activists continued with their activism, people dared to advocate for their needs and developed capacity to do so. Often NP served as a bridge linking people to authorities or humanitarian agencies, at time providing protective accompaniment to them, as well as accompanying staff of such agencies and authorities to places where they did not feel safe to go.

While the child recruitment practice continued, NP dealt with a number of abduction cases, helped that some children got released, and found safe places for children to escape (re-)recruitment. But in that time no influence on the overall practice of child recruitment can be noticed. The numbers of abductions and forced recruitments seem to have gone up and down irrespective of NP’s presence in certain areas. What was impacted by NP, was the way how authorities and civil society responded to the practice (see below). The same is true for the protection of human rights defenders: Again individual lives were protected and potential perpetrators deterred, but without visible impact on the overall human rights situation.

A direct and considerable impact that NP had – though it of course cannot be attributed to NP alone but to the joint efforts with UNICEF, local organizations, Colombo-based NGOs and civil society leaders - was in regard of how the cases of children who were released (or fled) from the armed groups were dealt with. NP – together with its partners - managed to turn public attention to the issue of child soldiers which before had been much of a taboo. It succeeded in helping to

bring about first an awareness campaign, and then helped to create a referral system among the various governmental, international and INGO actors involved with issues of former child soldiers. The capacity of authorities – at the local and regional level – was improved through NP's work.

Another area of impact that NP probably had is in regard to the capacity of communities dealing with conflicts and violence. Here original research would be needed to capture and substantiate this claim, but the sources at least in an anecdotal way show that community members, especially in the East, are dealing with inter- and intra-communal conflicts, and attribute the ability to do so to the trainings and support that NP gave them.

Lessons learned

NP has been learning many lessons in regard to what it has set out to do: to establish itself as an organization capable of promoting, developing and implementing unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCP) as a tool for reducing violence and protecting civilians in situations of violent conflict. NP grew a lot over the past ten years not only in size (from one project to four field projects in late 2011), but also in experience and knowledge on how to go about UCP, developing particular areas of expertise within the wider field of protection techniques, and how to manage all the various elements and tasks coming with it. The perhaps most important lessons and conclusions that can be drawn from the experience in Sri Lanka are the following:

1. It is important to have a good process of inception, planning and preparation of a project that includes good assessment and contextual strategizing, as well as continuity in regard of handling contacts and the planning process.
2. It is equally important to have a realistic mandate which is at the same time informing and guiding the development of concrete programs and is flexible enough to adapt to changing context in the country.
3. The objectives need to be formulated in a way that there are clear criteria for when the mandate is fulfilled and need to include issues relevant for the eventual exit (exit strategy), in particular questions of how to make NP's efforts sustainable beyond NP's stay in the country.
4. In all likelihood an exit strategy must include capacity building for both governmental and civil society local actors to take on tasks of protection and handling conflict after NP is gone, since rarely it can be assumed that the situation would improve so radically and quickly that all these tasks can be left to the legitimate state authorities alone.
5. The main source for effectiveness is good relationships and trust-building which is a process that takes some considerable time, and requires high standards of professionalism, standards of professionalism, a keen awareness on how one's actions may be perceived by others, training, and personal skills of field staff.
6. NP's approach of placing its teams in the middle of conflict zones has proven to be a highly effective tool in this context.
7. For successful strategizing thinking in systems is important – systems theory is the most adequate theoretical tool for moving and being efficient in a complex, conflict-ridden environment.
8. Including national staff as peacekeepers or comparable roles does not only make the work more effective, but is at the same time one step towards capacity-building and sustainability since this staff remains in the country after the internationals are gone.
9. People in the target communities will try to understand what a new actor coming to the field is and does by using their available experience and knowledge for comparison. Aid workers and missionaries are probably the two best-known such roles since they are found in most places of the Global South. Therefore it is essential to avoid misunderstandings and

identification with these two roles by being especially careful about any acts or symbols that may facilitate such miscomprehension.

10. Good management and administration practice in all fields (from bookkeeping to filing, reporting, human resource management etc.) is essential – shortcomings in these areas automatically impact the work in a negative way.
11. NP was capable to deal with locally-driven conflicts, but had no influence on what happened at ‘track 1’, the macro conflict level. In order to have influence on the conflict as a whole, what is probably required is a mandate backed by the main actors to the conflict (what was not the case in Sri Lanka) as well as sufficient resources (personnel-wise, financially and know-how-wise).
12. To be perceived as non-partisan or impartial is more than nonviolence, a principle that has proven essential to NP’s approach and work.
13. For both practical reasons and for NP’s overall legitimization, NP should not hesitate to make reference to international law and human rights covenants when explaining and justifying its interventions.
14. Unarmed civilian peacekeeping is not just the unarmed version of military peacekeeping and the functions that military peacekeeping has in dealing with a conflict. If it does not want to remain a purely humanitarian effort of saving lives at a particular point in time, it needs to include instruments that belong to peace-making and peace-building – ‘good offices’ and provide space for dialogue as well as capacity-building of local communities and civil society activists.

Two more conclusions may be directed more towards stakeholders of NP than of NP itself:

15. Missions of UCP can be both governmental and nongovernmental. As the example of NPSL shows, nongovernmental may have more flexibility to respond to needs on the ground.
16. Funding of UCP missions requires special budget lines – not those for development activities but budget lines dealing with security and ‘conflict prevention’.

1. Introduction

In December 2011, the first field project of the international NGO Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) came to its closure. Since 2003 NP had had staff – at peak times more than 80 - in Sri Lanka, the tropical island South East of the Indian subcontinent which suffered from 26 years of civil war. Nonviolent Peaceforce's overall purpose as it was defined then was to “*be sent to conflict areas to prevent death and destruction and protect human rights, thus creating the space for local groups to struggle nonviolently, enter into dialogue, and seek peaceful resolution*”.¹

The Sri Lanka project began as NP's pilot project, and has played an essential role in the development of the organization that this year (2012) is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Today NP has projects in three countries / regions: the Philippines, South Sudan and South Caucasus, and many lessons learned in Sri Lanka have already been implemented in these later projects.

1.1 The wider context of the conflicts in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island southeast of India, inhabited by around 20.4 million people.² The two most important national groups are the Sinhalese (around 74%, in their majority Buddhists), and the mostly Hindu Tamils (18.3 %). They are concentrated in the North and the East of the country. 7.6 % of the population are Muslims who consider themselves a quasi-ethnic group of their own though they mostly speak Tamil and live in areas where otherwise Tamils are the majority. One percent is descendants of the European colonialists (“Burghers”). There are Christians among the Sinhalese and Tamil populations (c. 7%), but they do not, unlike Muslims, consider themselves an ethnic group of their own but are spread throughout the country in Tamil as well as Sinhalese communities.

Sri Lanka won its independence from the British Empire in 1948. Immediately with independence the Sinhalese majority began to reverse what they saw as discrimination against them during British times, passing Sinhala Only language laws in 1956. The Republican constitution from 1972 defined Sri Lanka as a unified Sinhalese country, with Sinhala as national language, and Buddhism as state religion.

These developments led to growing, initially peaceful, protest by Tamils, especially people from the young generation who found themselves excluded from higher education and well-paid jobs. In the second half of the 1970s these protests became more and more violent. In 1976 the rebel *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* (short LTTE or Tamil Tigers) were founded, following years of internecine fighting among various Tamil political groups.

When the LTTE killed thirteen soldiers in the Jaffna peninsula and their bodies were brought to the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, riots started in July 1983 in which Tamil businesses and enterprises got destroyed by Sinhalese mobs. More than 2,000 people lost their lives, and 200,000 fled or were forced to leave their homes. It was the immediate trigger that started the open war between the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL).

1.1.1 The war in Sri Lanka

This war went through several stages which are important to sketch in order to understand the environment in which NP operated:

¹ NP Executive summary.

² For this section on history, see Ropers 2000, Fricke 2002, Frerks & Klem 2011, Goodhand & Korf 2011, Peace Direct 2011, Uyangoda 2011, Walton 2011, BBC 2012, International Crisis Group 2012a

1983 - 1990: After the massacres from July 1983 the situation escalated quickly. The LTTE strengthened its positions, and there was fighting both in the North and the East. A peacekeeping force sent by India in 1987 was forced to withdraw in 1990.

1990 - 1999: After the withdrawal of India, the war continued to escalate. That time was characterised also by internal 'cleansing' murders by the LTTE of oppositional Tamils, and the increase of terrorist acts, including suicide bombings. In 1996 government forces occupied Jaffna, which caused 400,000 Tamils to flee to the South.

January 2000 - February 2002: From April 2000 on the LTTE seemed to have the upper hand again, leading to a military stalemate. In February 2000 President Kumaratunga and LTTE leader Prabhakaran asked Norway to facilitate peace talks. At the end of 2001, and after three years of non-public mediation efforts, the parties agreed to a cease-fire. This ceasefire from December 2001 was strengthened by a 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed on 23 February 2002. The agreement was to be monitored by a Scandinavian civilian monitoring mission, the SLMM.

February 2002 – April 2003: Between April 2002 and April 2003 the government and the LTTE met at the negotiation table, but then the LTTE did not return on the ground that the government had not kept its promises. In that time the LTTE for the first time indicated that it might accept a solution other than independence of the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka. Confederal or even federal models were discussed. But quickly the feeling grew that they were caught in a "peace trap", being "ensnared by a peace process that had failed to meet their political aspirations".³

April 2003 – October 2005: In the years to follow Norway, but also Japan, India, the USA and others tried to convince both sides to return to the negotiation table. In March 2004 the LTTE split when a LTTE Commander in the East going under the name of Karuna⁴ declared its separation from the LTTE. After a few weeks of fighting, the Karuna group established itself as the main Tamil force in the East, although for more than two years also the LTTE kept a certain presence in the districts of Batticaloa and Trincomalee. The Karuna group formed an unofficial alliance with the forces of the Sri Lankan government and later in 2007 founded a political party, the TMVP. In late December 2004 a Tsunami hit Sri Lanka, killing 38,000 and displacing more than 1 million. Both Sinhalese and Tamil areas at the coasts were seriously affected, and for some months many people had the hope that the Tsunami may bring the parties together on humanitarian grounds. However, in fact, the question of inequitable aid deliveries to the Tamil regions started to divide both sides even more.⁵ In addition during this time there was a dramatic increase in disappearances and reports of human right violations by the Sri Lanka armed forces and police and the LTTE, with growing tensions between Muslims and Tamils in the East, and the Karuna group continuing the practices of forced child recruitment and intimidation of the population in the East.⁶

November 2005 - January 2008: After the Presidential elections of November 2005 that were won by Mahinda Rajapakse of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the country returned to an undeclared open war, although nominally the cease-fire agreement was still in place. Shortly after the elections there was a sharp increase in violence in the North and East, at that time mostly committed by the LTTE while the GOSL seemed to hold back. Direct attacks on the Sri Lankan military, including claymore mine attacks increased, as did assassinations, including the killing of politicians and prominent community leaders.

³ Goodhand & Korf 2011:1.

⁴ His real name is Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan.

⁵ See Frerks & Klem 2011.

⁶ See Human Rights Watch 2007, Furnari 2006:4, PD report 2007-3, 7 and 11.

In February 2006 the government and LTTE met once more for talks in Geneva that were facilitated by Norway in order to stop the spiral into war, but a subsequent meeting in April ended without tangible results. Soon after violence escalated further, and the government started to retaliate following attacks by the LTTE.

Later that year the GOSL gave up the restraint it had exercised until then, and started several major military offensives mostly in the East of Sri Lanka, and with support of the Karuna group. By the end of 2006, the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) had gained control over all the areas still held by the LTTE with the exception of a few isolated pockets in the jungle. In 2007, fighting started to focus on the North of Sri Lanka where the SLAF met with decisive resistance by the LTTE.

The same year, the Karuna group itself suffered a split in two factions, and Karuna was basically ousted in favour of another commander (Pillaiyan) who, unlike Karuna who had fled the country some time ago, had stayed in the East.

The intra-Tamil fighting between the LTTE and the Karuna group in 2006 and 2007 caused large numbers of new IDPs. In March 2007, the total number of IDPs since April 2006 had reached approximately 315,000. This number was to be added to 200,000-250,000 Tsunami IDPs and about 315,000 that were displaced before 2002 (totalling around 830,000 IDPs).⁷

January 2008 – May 2009: End of January 2008, the Sri Lankan government officially pulled out of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement, and launched a massive offensive in the North. In January 2009, government troops captured the northern town of Kilinochchi, held for ten years by the Tamil Tigers as their administrative headquarters.

In May 2009, the government declared the LTTE defeated after the SLAF had overrun the last patch of rebel-held territory in the Northeast, and killed Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE.

Since the end of the war international concern has been raised regarding alleged violations of International Law in Conflict during the war by both sides⁸, and in particular during the final months of the fighting and afterwards. During those last months of the war, many civilians were trapped in the ever-shrinking conflict zone, and their fate, as well the fate of the surrendering LTTE leaders and fighters in those final days, have become issues of dispute between GOSL and international human rights organizations, including respective UN committees.

June 2009 – now (July 2012): After the end of the war, around 300,000 Tamil civilians and former fighters who had surrendered were detained in camps. Resettlement began at the end of 2009, but up-to-date has not been completed. Only in late 2011, certain parts of the North that had been under LTTE control earlier became accessible for civilian aid organizations without a special clearance by the Ministry of Defence.

There are no exact and reliable figures on the number of victims the war has cost. They vary between 70,000 and 100,000 dead, and several hundred thousand who were displaced at one time or the other of the fighting.⁹ According to UNHCR, there are currently still about 430,000 IDPs living in camps or with host families.¹⁰

1.1.2 Civil society

⁷ PD Report 2007-3, referencing UNICEF figures.

⁸ The LTTE was responsible for displacing large numbers of civilians, in particular Muslims, from the North, was famous for forcefully recruiting children, and was on many international lists of terrorist organizations in particular due to its murder of the former Premier Rajiv Gandhi in India in 1991.

⁹ See International Crisis Group 2012a: 5, BBC 2012, referring to figures by the UN from 2010. Chaulia (2011:45) speaks of 100,000 or more according to civil society organizations in Sri Lanka.

¹⁰ http://www.unhcr.lk/helping_idp.php [3.7.2012]

Sri Lanka is a comparatively old democracy and has a strong civil society with several generations of NGOs (for example *Sarvodaya* as one of the first generation and the *National Peace Council* that was founded in 1995 as one of the second), a politically active Buddhist and Christian clergy, trade unions, women groups, independent journalists and many local groups and activists. In spite of the adverse conditions during the war, and in spite of political murders and intimidation directed against those who speak out, many of these groups are still active.¹¹ And of course, many civil society organizations are working side by side with the government to improve livelihoods, look after victims of natural disasters and war, etc.¹²

1.1.3 Protection activities of other agencies

NP has neither been the first nor during the time it was in the country the only organization dealing with peacekeeping or the protection of civilians. Later in this study it will be discussed how to differentiate what NP has come to call civilian peacekeeping from other types of work.

1.1.3.1 Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF)

The first case is not one of civilian peacekeeping, but of military. In 1987 India sought to support a cease-fire agreement by the sending of a peacekeeping force of up to 100,000 soldiers that was mandated to disarm the LTTE and protect the Tamil population.¹³ The operational tasks of the IPKF were to separate the two warring groups and ensure observance of the ceasefire, take over weapons and ammunitions from the LTTE and other Tamil militant groups, ensure dismantling of all Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) camps established after May 1987, and *help the local population return to their homes so that they could live in peace*.¹⁴

But the agreement was made between India and the government of Sri Lanka, assuming that India was speaking for the Tamils (India was generally seen as being on the side of the LTTE), but had not included the LTTE. The result was that the peacekeepers quickly found themselves fighting the LTTE, with the latter for some time allegedly even making an alliance with the government of Sri Lanka against India. In 1990 the Indian peacekeepers were forced to withdraw when national Sinhalese sentiment also turned against the presence of a foreign army, leaving behind them little else than a very complicated relationship between India and Sri Lanka, and the memory of unsuccessful peacekeeping by a foreign intervenor.

1.1.3.2 Peace Brigades International

The second case is that of Peace Brigades International (PBI), an INGO like NP, and one which in many ways served as an example for NP as well as sharing some common history through founders and staff of NP who earlier had worked with PBI. PBI's main strategy is protective accompaniment of human rights defenders (HRDs) and communities whose lives and work are threatened by political violence.¹⁵

PBI had been in Sri Lanka from October 1989 to April 1998. They came to Sri Lanka just after a time when the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict was accompanied by an intra-Sinhalese one, a very violent uprising led by the JVP. That uprising lasted from November 1987 to November 1989, and cost the lives of 30 - 60,000 people. The government fought that uprising not only with regular troops but also cooperated with private 'home defences' (death squads). After the end of the uprising,

¹¹ Kloos 2000, Fricke 2002, Howard 2002:12-13, Kendle 2002, Goodhand et al. 2011.

¹² Walton 2011.

¹³ See Ghosh 2000, Sharma 2010.

¹⁴ Sharma 2010.

¹⁵ See www.peacebrigades.org. PBI's work in Sri Lanka and internal management challenges are well documented through the Ph.D thesis Patrick Coy (1997) wrote on their work.

politically motivated intimidation and killings continued to plague the country. PBI's work focussed on the protection of civil society activists:

Team members accompanied Buddhist monks on a peace march, investigated reports of illegal detention centers, accompanied threatened lawyers, street demonstrations and pickets. They also acted as international observers, networked with government, diplomatic and NGO representatives on the island, and wrote regular reports on the political/human rights situation in Sri Lanka.¹⁶

PBI had to close the project after problems with the government that demanded that PBI was to lay open all its contacts and submitting reports prior to publication for approval.

1.1.3.3 Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM)

To monitor the Ceasefire Agreement of 2002 Norway, jointly with the other four Scandinavian countries, sent a Monitoring Mission with initially around 50 civilian, unarmed monitors. The mandate of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) was to observe and report violations of the ceasefire agreement, and also to mediate on the ground if conflicts built up.¹⁷

As a mission which had entered the country under an official status, the members of the SLMM enjoyed certain privileges compared to civilian nongovernmental organizations like PBI or NP. The agreement with the parties detailed:

... the SLMM will conduct international verification through on-site monitoring in accordance with the Ceasefire Agreement. It is, however, understood that the effect of the SLMM will depend on the parties' willingness to abide with recommendations from SLMM.

- 1. Immunity from personal arrest or detention and from legal process in respect of all acts, including words spoken or written, performed by them in the course of duty.*
- 2. Inviolability for all papers and documents.*
- 3. Freedom of movement for the performance of their tasks, including traveling on board GOSL vessels and aircraft. The LTTE has agreed to grant the same access in respect of their vessels.¹⁸*

One of the short-comings of the SLMM has been in the eyes of many observers that its mandate was limited to the CFA between GOSL and LTTE, but could not get active when there was any other kind of violence, be it human rights violations or clashes between the different Tamil groups, between Tamils and Muslims, etc.

In 2006 the LTTE demanded that all monitors from EU countries would be withdrawn after it had been banned by the European Union as a terrorist organization. From 1 September 2006 on, therefore, the SLMM was reduced to a total of 20 monitors from Iceland and Norway, the two of the five original members of SLMM that were not a part of the EU, and got repeatedly blocked by both sides from inspecting the aftermath of attacks. The SLMM had to leave the country when the CFA was formally abrogated by the government in January 2008.

1.1.3.4 UNICEF

UNICEF is the UN organization that is – inter alia - dealing with child rights and the protection of children. During the war¹⁹, UNICEF dealt with the issue of child soldiers, and for that purpose

¹⁶ See <http://www.peacebrigades.org/field-projects/closed-projects/sri-lanka/>

¹⁷ See <http://www.norway.lk/Embassy/Peace-Process/Sri-Lanka-Monitoring-Mission/>. Between February 2002 and April 2007, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission found the LTTE guilty of 3,830 violations of the Ceasefire Agreement, while holding the government responsible for 351 (www.peaceinsrilanka.org/negotiations/monitoring-mission, 20 June 2012). There is little secondary material available on the SLMM; the only study on civilian peacekeeping that included them was Mahony's overview over techniques of protective presence from 2006.

¹⁸ Status of Mission Agreement 2002.

¹⁹ UNICEF's presence in Sri Lanka goes back to 1969 resp. 1973. See http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/overview_868.htm [3.7.2012].

also used NP's services as well as those of other implementing partners. Since 2002, UNICEF registered 7,500 girls and boys who had been recruited as child soldiers. They negotiated with the rebel leaders and in many cases achieved their release, and helped them to get access to transition centres. Since May 2009, UNICEF accompanies sole children back home and mobilizes the communities for their support, and is also dealing with educational or vocational needs.²⁰

1.1.3.5 UNHCR

The second UN agency present in Sri Lanka that deals with issues of protection is UNHCR. UNHCR's involvement in Sri Lanka dates back to 1987 when the organization was invited by the government to facilitate large-scale repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from India. Their website states:

*UNHCR's role has evolved in the last two decades, through conflict, statelessness, and the tsunami, to its status as the lead agency for the protection and assistance of conflict-affected IDPs in Sri Lanka. ... UNHCR's ultimate objective is to identify, sustain and enhance prospects for durable solutions in order to end displacement in Sri Lanka. Since the end of the conflict, UNHCR has been focused on helping people returning to their homes from camps in the north and east.*²¹

UNHCR's protection work includes monitoring, distribution of basic household items to IDPs, provision of shelter and coordination of shelter activities in the North and East, capacity building for local government structures, implementation of small-scale projects involving communities and engagement in various projects destined to help the reintegration of IDPs and refugees.²²

1.2 Nonviolent Peaceforce

Nonviolent Peaceforce is an International NGO (INGO) which was founded end of 2002 in New Delhi after a period of almost three years of preparation led by an Interim Steering Committee (ISC). The initiative was taken by two US Americans, a long-standing peace activist from California and a community organizer from Minnesota, who met at the 'The Hague Appeal for Peace Conference' in May 1999. They soon formed a small circle of committed activists and staff around them, mostly from the United States and Canada, but quickly also including one or two Europeans, a Gandhian from India, a human rights defender from Guatemala, a university teacher from Thailand and a Sierra Leonan living in exile in the United States.²³ They all were united in what Moser-Puangsuwan and Weber (2000) rightly called a "recurrent vision": The vision to be able to prevent and end wars by sending unarmed civilians to the conflict area. The founders were well aware of the precursors of their initiative, but hoped to avoid the various challenges and traps that prevented all these precursors to become 'large-scale' and to develop the organizational capacity to send numbers that are able to impact a conflict at large. After the commissioning of a feasibility study on unarmed civilian peacekeeping²⁴ and research into a larger number of conflict regions in order to identify three options for a pilot project, the formal founding event took place end of November 2002 in India. The founding assembly of member organizations (originally around 80) recruited from all continents chose Sri Lanka as a pilot project over two other options, namely working in Israel/ Palestine or in Guatemala.

The member organizations are to meet every three years in an International Assembly and to elect a governing board, the International Governing Council (IGC). For many years the main

²⁰ See <http://www.unicef.de/projekte/sri-lanka/sri-lanka-kindersoldaten/> [22.6.2012].

²¹ See http://www.unhcr.lk/changing_role.php [22.6.2012].

²² See http://www.unhcr.lk/helping_idp.php [3.7.2012].

²³ See ISC minutes 2001.

²⁴ Schweitzer et al. 2001.

operational office was in Minneapolis where the Executive Director was based, though NP soon also registered in Belgium as a second HQ. Today Brussels is NP's HQ and only international office though it maintains its basis in the United States for fundraising and advocacy purposes.

Today, NP defines its mission and vision as follows:

The mission of Nonviolent Peaceforce is to promote, develop and implement unarmed civilian peacekeeping as a tool for reducing violence and protecting civilians in situations of violent conflict.

We envision a world in which large-scale unarmed civilian peacekeeping using proven nonviolent strategies is recognized as a viable alternative in preventing, addressing, and mitigating violent conflicts worldwide. Our primary strategy for achieving this vision is the creation of space to foster dialogue.²⁵

NP's basic way of operating is that it sends international staff (modestly paid, usually with 2-year contracts) who are prepared in a 3-4 week training, to a crisis area to serve there as 'civilian peacekeepers'. These staff then live in the area where they work, combining proactive presence²⁶ with particular activities like accompaniment of individuals, monitoring of events, training of communities in protective strategies etc. They are recruited on a world-wise basis, with the majority of them coming from the Global South, not from North America or Europe, and work together with local staff with various job descriptions whose roles have become more and more important over the years. (This matter will be discussed further down.) The Sri Lanka project was, as mentioned, NP's first field project. 2006 a second project in the Philippines (Mindanao) began. 2007- 08 there was a short-term accompaniment project in Guatemala. 2010 a third long-term field project started in South Sudan, and 2011 a fourth project has been initiated in the South Caucasus (Georgia).

1.3 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This study is intended to bring the unique experience of NP's work in Sri Lanka to a closure by summarizing the experiences and lessons of nine year of work. Its objectives are

- *To advance the understanding of the impact of unarmed civilian peacekeeping, the strategies best suited to improved security, as well as the pitfalls to be avoided, to inform practitioners as well as donors.*
- *Expanded legitimacy and credibility of unarmed civilian peacekeeping as an alternative to military intervention in armed conflict.*
- *Critical and comprehensive research on field experience in Sri Lanka produced.*
- *Awareness and understanding of UCP among operational agencies, policymakers, and opinion leaders in the humanitarian and peacebuilding fields increased.²⁷*

The study consists of two parts. This report here aims at passing on key lessons learned and advancing the field of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. It documents what NP did in Sri Lanka and why, what the consequences were, and what NP learned from it. The report is supplemented by a report which focusses on management and organizational questions which may be of interest for NP and its stakeholders, but of little interest for a wider audience.

²⁵ <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/about/mission>. This phrasing differs from the original mission statement quoted above. The role the work in Sri Lanka played in this process of revision of mission and vision is discussed in the internal report accompanying this report here.

²⁶ See Mahony 2006 for this term.

²⁷ Terms of Reference 2012.

1.4 Sources and methodology

The study is a meta-evaluation mostly based on (external and internal) evaluations and reviews and on reports that staff of NP produced over the years:

There have been five external evaluations and studies on NPSL. The first was conducted in 2004 pro-bono by Jørgen Johansen and two collaborators from the Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Tromsø, Norway. This evaluation focusses mostly on organizational questions and on how NPSL worked on developing its work and niche. The evaluators interviewed during a two-week visit almost every field team member (FTM) present in April 2004 as well as several local partners and the staff in Colombo.

In 2006, Anne Jan de Witte, a Belgian student, wrote a master thesis which evaluated NPSL's work mostly regarding its organizational capacities (organizational learning), based on a 14-week visit to Sri Lanka between February and June 2006.

The second external evaluation commissioned by NP followed in 2007, covering the full period of the project from its beginning in 2003. It was conducted by Hagen Berndt (Germany) and Hakima Hebib (Algeria) based on a 2-3 week field visit to Sri Lanka. They looked both at programmatic achievements (outcomes) and at questions of implementation (organization, structure etc.).²⁸

In 2010 Hagen Berndt, one of the two evaluators of 2007 and an expert on Sri Lanka, was commissioned by a donor to do another external evaluation. The evaluation looked at three civilian based conflict transformation projects that benefitted of funding from the German Foreign Office by the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa zivik) through the zivik funding program in Sri Lanka. NPSL was one of these projects.

A final external evaluation was conducted in 2011 by a Sri Lankan consultancy firm, the *Development Strategies Group*. They looked at the three major programs of NPSL in the time between 2009 and 2011 in regard to outcomes and impact, and also assessed the exit strategy applied by NP.

These external studies have been complemented by a number of internal reviews. There were internal evaluations of the first recruitment and training of field staff in 2003 (Napier 2003, Schweitzer 2003a and b), an organizational review of NP in 2004 (Schweitzer 2004a) and an evaluation of the in-country training by the then-team manager Jan Passion (2004), a qualitative review which included a field visit and a review workshop in 2005 (Schweitzer 2005a and b), a lessons-learned report by Ellen Furnari (2006) who had joined her partner Jan Passion to Sri Lanka and volunteered as a researcher, an evaluation of the project work done with UNICEF by NPSL's child protection officer Florington Aseervatham (2009) and a report on a MSE workshop by the last NPSL Country Director Steve Alston (Alston 2011).

A third type of sources used were the public annual reports produced by NP.

Fourthly, I consulted a number of reports submitted to donor partners and other stakeholders. These reports unfortunately were only available for the last years of NPSL's operations – it was not possible to retrieve earlier reports.

A fifth very important category of sources have been internal documents and emails which highlight specific problems and issues that came up in the course of the project. In particular these were minutes of various management groups (Sri Lanka Management Team, Program Committee, International Governing Council) that oversaw the Sri Lanka project over the years, and monthly and quarterly reports written by the field project, usually the respective country director.

²⁸ That evaluation met with some criticism from the side of NP, among other points for using a framework of conflict transformation while that was by NP itself not considered part of NPSL's mandate or objective. See Schweitzer 2007.

In addition to these written reports, I have interviewed by phone the majority of NPSL's country directors and interim directors as well as the two Executive Directors that NP has (had).²⁹ These interviews served two purposes: to fill gaps in information and to learn what those leaders of NP's efforts in Sri Lanka drew as lessons from the work NPSL had done and what challenges they had met.³⁰

Last not least it needs to be laid open that this meta-evaluation is not really an external study. I have been a staff member of NP for much time of its existence, and though I am no longer involved with the running of NP, I was directly involved and shared responsibility for the work of NP Sri Lanka until early 2008 as line manager of the Country Directors since 2005, and then again as a consultant Interim Program Director from July 2010 to November 2011.

Being not a fully external evaluator has had in my eyes advantages as well as disadvantages. The advantages were the easy access to a huge collection of electronic files over much of the period under study and the familiarity with NP and its work in Sri Lanka. With a very few exceptions, everything that is stated in this report on the work of NPSL is referenced to written records which, though they are not in the public domain but mostly NP internal documents, can be checked. Also I have quoted quite extensively from these documents – perhaps more extensively than I would have if there had not been the danger of bias. Nevertheless, this familiarity of course on the other hand may be considered a liability – though striving for distance and objectivity, readers from outside of NP will have to decide to what degree this study managed to achieve this ambition.

1.5 Terminology

Nonviolent Peaceforce uses the term “Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping” (UCP) to describe its activities. NP's website defines it as follows:

*Unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCP) refers to the use of unarmed civilians to do 'peacekeeping'. Peacekeeping is about preventing, reducing and stopping violence. ... Unarmed civilian peacekeeping is a generic term that gives recognition to a wide range of activities by unarmed civilians to reduce violence and protect civilians in situations of violent conflict.*³¹

There are two other generic terms in the field describing – more or less – the same approach: “proactive presence” and “accompaniment”. Accompaniment or protective accompaniment has a narrow and a wider meaning. As a narrow meaning it refers to the physical act of being with someone as her or his (unarmed) bodyguard, deterring violent attacks or police harassment through the fact that an international would witness the act.³² In a wider sense, accompaniment refers to

*... physical presence of foreign volunteers with the dual purpose of protecting civilian activists or organizations from violent, politically motivated attacks and encouraging them to proceed with their democratic activities.*³³

In the wider sense, accompaniment then may refer to everything these “foreign volunteers” may do - including addressing the national and the international context.³⁴

Proactive presence describes basically the same thing –

²⁹ Not all of them have been reached or were available for interviews.

³⁰ The original plan formulated in the TOR to include a visit to Sri Lanka and conduct interviews with key partners and advisors in Sri Lanka was not feasible given the (limited) resources of 30 working days available for the evaluation.

³¹ <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/ucp> [31.7.2012].

³² This is what Patrick Coy calls the „street context“. See Coy 1997:25.

³³ Mahony & Eguren 1997:2.

³⁴ Coy 1997:25.

*... to deploy unarmed international staff, under a variety of institutional mandates, in the belief that their presence will offer some protection against abuse.*³⁵

In this study here, the term “UCP” will be used to describe the general approach; “accompaniment” will be used only in its narrow sense or “street context”.

1.6 Structure of the report

This report begins in chapter 2 with an overview over the activities and programs that NPSL undertook over the years. Chapter 3 then follows up from that description asking what NP has achieved in the nine years of its presence, based on the various evaluations and reviews that have been undertaken. Chapter 4 asks how these achievements have been made – what were the key elements for effectiveness and efficiency. The 5th chapter discusses some conclusions and observations regarding NP’s theory and practice. Chapter 6 summarizes some important conclusions and lessons learned.

Attached to the report are a map of Sri Lanka, an overview over strategies of conflict intervention and an overview over different approaches to protection

³⁵ Mahony 2006, preface p. V, written by David Petrasek.

2. A short historiography of NP Sri Lanka

In this chapter, I will try to describe the project as it developed over the nine year of its existence, including the time of its inception before the work in the field actually began.

2.1 The planning phase

The first contacts to Sri Lanka went back to 2001 when one of the co-founders of NP visited Sri Lanka and met representatives of the Sri Lankan NGO *Sarvodaya*. When researching options for a pilot project, a research team visited Sri Lanka in 2002 and prepared a proposal to the Founding Assembly of NP end of 2002.³⁶

The original proposal assessed the potential of a project in that country that seemed to have just left open warfare behind.³⁷ The proposal relied heavily on the intention to work being developed in cooperation with a local partner, the NGO *Paffrel*, which is an organization specializing in election monitoring. *Paffrel* at that point intended to set up 25 District Committees to deal with human rights violations, mediation and child soldiers, and the idea was that NP would work jointly with them on this project. Simultaneously, it was envisaged that NP would work as well as with other local organizations that are listed in the proposal on other projects, for example helping to develop an early warning system in the East. As stated in NP's 2002 Annual Report:

*While high-level peace negotiations are underway, Sri Lanka is in danger of returning to armed conflict. Local peaceworkers and civilian groups believe this is an opportune time to strengthen and expand grassroots peacekeeping. In partnership with local groups in both the North and the South, the Peaceforce team will work at the village level in 16 vulnerable areas across Sri Lanka for three years. Fifty trained Peaceforce team members will apply three proven methods for conflict transformation: international presence, accompaniment, and monitoring.*³⁸

The objectives according to the original proposal were as follows:

1. *The promotion of non-violence as a choice. Sri Lankan political culture is very violent whilst the North and East remain heavily militarised. The biggest contribution an NP project could make is conflict mitigation through the promotion of non-violent strategies as a credible option.*
2. *Increase in safe space for civilian participation.*
3. *Demonstration of non-violent intervention in Asia.*
4. *Deterrence of relapse into armed conflict.*

For deployment, a phased approach was suggested:

The question of appropriate numbers has been under discussion with Paffrel. Due to the delicate political situation it is advisable to start with a small team, perhaps 3 fieldworkers who accompany the lead team to Sri Lanka. The work of these pioneer NP workers (experienced in conflict monitoring) will help to develop credibility. If work continues beyond the one year mark of the timeline below and if each site listed above has at least 3 NP staff, there will be around 50 team members in the field. Additionally, there will be administrative staff and other members who are asked for on particular committees etc.

Stage 1 March-July 2003: Lead Team arrive in Sri Lanka and begin working with Paffrel. Setting up of office, developing logistics, trial and evaluation of pioneer NP staff.

Stage 2 July-October 2003: Field Presence, 2 locations.

Stage 3 Nov 2003-Jan 2004: Increase Field Presence. 6 Locations.

Stage 4 July 2004: Expansion of field presence to potential 16 locations.

³⁶ Schweitzer 2004a. This pre-history is described in more detail in the internal report.

³⁷ Howard & Foster 2002.

³⁸ Annual Report 2002:11.

*Stage 5: Preparation for Exit, similar downsizing of team compared to development phase.*³⁹

2.2 Preparation for deployment

After the Founding Assembly end of November 2002, the preparation for the project began. An International Governing Council (IGC) member who had also been on the exploratory team was hired to lead the preparation. She was accompanied by a staff group called the 'Sri Lanka Management Team' (SLMT) which started meeting by phone in January 2003. The preparation included another visit to Sri Lanka and the hire of the first Country Director in May 2003, a British expat who had lived for many years in Sri Lanka. In June / July then followed a three-week long assessment and training of future Field Team Members in Thailand⁴⁰ who were chosen on the basis of a worldwide recruitment campaign. The same time a Code of Conduct was developed and approved by the Executive of NP, and an international network of volunteers initiated who would stand by if needed to write letters and faxes of protest to the government or other actors if needed to protect staff or partners.⁴¹ End of September, eleven FTMs from nine countries arrived in Sri Lanka for a four-week week orientation training; end of October 2003 they started to work in the districts.

Even before the FTMs were deployed, it had become clear that the original proposal did not match the realities on the ground any more. Not only did the negotiations between GOSL and LTTE collapse in April 2003 which put already then a question mark on the peace process, but the intended partner *Paffrel* did not follow through with the idea of District Committees, so that NP found itself starting its project without a formal partner relation and clear directions from a local partner on what to do and how to do it.⁴² The third element was that NP did not manage to raise the funds needed, so that for some months it was not clear if it would be possible to send more than three or four FTMs to the field. In the end, thanks to donors in the USA and the German government that gave NP a grant, NP was able to finance the recruitment, training and deployment of a first group of 11 people. And fourthly, the feed-back received in Sri Lanka soon made it obvious that the process of fast growth envisaged in the original project was not sustainable, not only for financial reasons but for reasons of acceptance in the country.⁴³

2.3 The first fourteen months: The field teams starts working

Four teams of two to three FTMs each were placed in Jaffna, Mutur, Valaichchennai and Matara, being supported by a four-person office in Colombo. Matara is a centre of past political violence in the far South of the island and a purely Sinhalese area, Jaffna is the principal city in the almost purely Tamil territory in the North of the island. During that time Jaffna was under control of the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL). Mutur is a small town in Trincomalee District in the East which had seen the highest number of civilian casualties from interethnic rioting since the start of the cease fire; and Valaichchenai in Batticaloa District, also in the East and South of Mutur, had also been suffering significant casualties from interethnic violence.

³⁹ Later in this chapter it will be discussed, that very little of the expectations and plans outlined in this original proposal eventually became implemented, neither the focus on work with one major local partner, the expectation to deter a relapse into armed conflict, nor the intended size of the project.

⁴⁰ Today, NP uses the generic term "International Civilian Peacekeepers", but the earlier-used term "FTM" never was fully abolished from the language describing NPSL. In this report, I am mostly using 'FTM'.

⁴¹ See SLMT notes from 2003. The Emergency Response Network – ERN is discussed more fully in the internal report.

⁴² Though formally Paffrel has agreed to be NP's partner (for fund-raising purposes for example), the first real co-operation in the field happened in the pre-election time 2004 when some sFTMs made themselves available - leaving their teams for a while - to do election monitoring with Paffrel. See Schweitzer 2004a.

⁴³ SLMT notes from 2003.

NP rented simple houses for each of the teams where they both worked and lived, the location of the houses chosen with some strategic calculations in mind. In Valaichchenai, for example, the office was right at a street which separated Muslim and Tamil populations in the village.⁴⁴

At the beginning NP worked with part-time translators, but had no other national field staff, nor vehicles to travel around. In early 2004, two new FTMs joined the project (without undergoing a basic training) to increase the numbers and replace one FTM who had left prematurely.⁴⁵ In 2004, following the split in the LTTE, it was decided to reduce the size of the Jaffna and Matara offices and increase the Valaichchenai team to six and the Mutur team to three FTMs to increase the effectiveness of the work in the East.⁴⁶ The Jaffna office remained closed for a few months in 2004 and only irregularly opened through 2005.⁴⁷

The teams faced several major challenges:

1. With the *Paffrel* project not coming through, they found themselves without partners on the ground who expected them. Instead, they introduced themselves to a large number of local groups, religious leaders, as well international, government and LTTE representatives, and tried to find local partners and a meaningful role within their mandate.⁴⁸
2. The reports from that time show clearly that all the teams struggled to find work for themselves to do. They had been taught in the training that they were to do “presence, monitoring and accompaniment”, but not how to develop a project or programme. No surprise that all teams were floundering for some time. Eventually the teams in the East (Mutur and Valaichchenai) managed to find a useful role in monitoring and accompaniment of civil society activists and soon after also in regard to child recruitment⁴⁹, while that took longer for the office in Jaffna.⁵⁰ Matara had been chosen as a field site mostly for reasons of balance, to be present also in a purely Sinhalese community rather than only in the minority regions. There also had been political violence earlier during the JVP uprising in the area. But the team in Matara never really got grounded and did not find a role of its own to play in an area where there were no protection requests forthcoming from individuals or communities, and thus some activities diverged into various pieces of social work and peacebuilding activities (for example they encouraged the establishment of School Youth Peace Clubs in many of the principal schools in the area.⁵¹) Eventually the office was shut in 2005 and resources were shifted to other field sites.⁵²
3. Probably it was no wonder that NP’s uncertainty how to go about the work led to confusion in the communities where NP was based:

Four local partners were formally interviewed. Without being able to do any scientific representative surveys the general conclusion is that many saw NP-teams as some form of Christian missionaries. This was not necessarily something they all regarded as being bad. The reasons for this judgment of the teams were many and different. That local people saw many Field Team Members going to church on Sundays was one frequent observation. The office in Jaffna was full of Christian symbols and many of the first contacts the

⁴⁴ Annual Report 2003:16pp.

⁴⁵ Schweitzer 2004a.

⁴⁶ Howard & Knox 2004.

⁴⁷ Hebib & Berndt 2007:13.

⁴⁸ Schweitzer 2004a.

⁴⁹ SLMT 21.10.2003, Schweitzer 2004a, Hebib & Berndt 2007:12

⁵⁰ From that period there are only occasional reports on concrete outputs to be found. A report from early 2005 mentions that the Jaffna team had been “instrumental in working with religious and other community leaders to initiate a Peace Dialogue Group to explore the development of peace and its eventual impact on the community in ways not considered ‘safe’ in general Jaffna society for fear of questioning either the Government or LTTE’s agendas for the peace process”. (Sri Lanka Project Report 2005 1/2-3).

⁵¹ Sri Lanka Project Report 2005 1/2-3.

⁵² Schweitzer et al 2005b. There are today different opinions if it had been a good idea to go to Matara at all. Some think it should have been skipped (Mel Duncan), others think it was a good move but just not implemented well (Interview Atif Hameed).

teams took were with Christian individuals or organizations. These first contacts were interpreted as indications of the team's main interests.

Most local people were confused about the functions/ roles of the teams. That NP did not have money to support local projects or could offer education and training was something of a mystery for many. This confusion was not reduced by the ongoing debate on mandate for the project and the teams. To be able to clearly express what they are able, willing and have mandate to do would be a major improvement to build good relations on for the future.⁵³

4. The first years – right into the second half of the decade – the work was sometimes overshadowed by internal various issues and problems which had to do with decision-making in the teams, different personal styles, different expectations in regard to the work, lack of role differentiation and agreed-upon structures within the teams which resulted in both lack of responsibility and accountability, inefficiencies and unequal distribution of labour (which eventually created resentments). and the mere fact that the close living and working together enforced through houses that served at the same time as accommodation and office easily created tensions between people.⁵⁴

2.3.1 Changing mandate

In the first year, there was a lot of discussion on the mandate both within NPSL and in the overseeing bodies.⁵⁵ In December 2003, the SLMT suggested to add two points to the mandate as it had been formulated in the project proposal:

1. Act as channel to other international organizations (e.g. UNICEF).
2. Facilitate people to contact each other (from area to area, or between groups in one area).

In addition, it was suggested

3. Not to be involved in training though there were requests.
4. Conduct further exploration if human rights monitoring should be part of the mandate.⁵⁶

Johansen in his evaluation 2004 writes:

... it is obvious that the questions around the mandate created a lot of confusion, frustration and irritation among Field Team Members. More than half of those we interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the mandate of that time. The main reasons for this were based on demands and wishes from local partners which could not be met under the present mandate. This situation added to other elements of dissatisfaction and created for some Field Team Members a situation that made the whole work they were supposed to do impossible.

Both Field Team Members and the only local partner we met who knew anything about the Mandate saw it as too narrow a description of what they thought would be useful tasks for the Teams.⁵⁷

Later in 2004, a new formulation was agreed upon and approved by the IGC meeting in Mexico: “Reduce violence to increase the safety of civilians in Sri Lanka so they can contribute to a lasting peace with justice” was the new overarching mandate, with a list of objectives with it:

- Reduce the level of/ and potential for violence
- Increase the safety of civilians during the peace process
- Improve possibilities for civilian participation

⁵³ Johansen 2004: 17pp.

⁵⁴ See Johansen 2004, Schweitzer 2005a, Vora 2005, comment by Rita Webb 2012 to first draft of this study.

⁵⁵ That was the SLMT until early 2004 when a mixed governing board - staff working group, the Program t, took over the role of oversight.

⁵⁶ SLMT 30.12.03.

⁵⁷ Johansen 2004:8.

- *Increase the likelihood of peace with justice through civilian participation*
- *Increase the confidence and creativity of civilians as a result of improving their safety*
- *Deter resumption of violent conflict*⁵⁸

Compared to the earlier objectives and mandate, the change is obvious: the formulation reflects clearly a better understanding of the situation in Sri Lanka, and is more careful in regard to what can be achieved. There was no more: “*promotion of non-violence as a choice*”, and more focus on what the protection of civilians would mean. As the repeated mention of “*civilian participation*” shows, at that moment the main target group of NP still was civil society and its activists.

2.3.2 The activities

In the end this process of seeking to define role, partners and way of working turned out to have successfully laid the groundwork for effectively working on the goals that NP had set itself.

Furnari describes the process of the early years as follows:

The work in Sri Lanka began with a phase of building relationships, being present with people and places and small local NGOs. Eventually there were specific requests for help and critical incidents occurred. NP was at times able to make a difference with presence, networking, accompaniment, linking, witnessing, monitoring, reporting. The follow up led to new respect for and understanding of NP's work, new requests, new relationships, a gradual building of the work. NP's work with religious festivals, hartals, violence between fishing communities, violence between the Sri Lankan army and LTTE, and between communities all fit this process model.

Work in particular communities followed a similar pattern. Relationships were initiated around specific incidents, requests were made for something small with individuals and/or a group. NP was helpful – facilitating a meeting, supporting some nonviolent steps to resolve conflicts and tensions, accompanying people to GOSL or LTTE to resolve critical issues, supporting small groups of civilians to take new action, to open up discussion even of topics usually not discussed. People and communities started to trust and look to NP for more follow up.

*Through the actual work, NP built relationships with other organizations in the field. Over time NP teams helped support and create and/or participated in networks that deal with human security, peace, children issues, early warning, violence preparation, election monitoring, tsunami aid and IDPs. NP accompanies, networks, facilitates, encourages, connects in and through these relationships. NP supports the work of CBOs, NGO, INGOs, IOs and local government and authorities in development, protection, peace, and violence prevention and they use NP's work in turn to prevent violence and increase safety to increase their effectiveness.*⁵⁹

2.3.2.1 Election monitoring

While the teams were still in the process of developing their role and work, provincial elections came up in early 2004. That was a chance for NP to renew its relations with *Paffrel*, the organization that had invited NP. Election monitoring may mean different things: For *Paffrel* it was about monitoring if the elections were free and fair. For NP, the purpose of its activities was to provide protective accompaniment and presence for the national monitors and to some degree also the voters.

Case 1: Election Monitoring

⁵⁸ Program Committee 2004d; also Annual Report 2003 (which was written in mid 2004) and NPSL Quarterly Report 6-8/2004.

⁵⁹ Furnari 2006:10-11.

PAFFREL took advantage of NP support to observe, for the first time, the filing of nomination papers, which marks the start of the campaign proper. Close of nominations can also herald the start of election violence when competing parties hold large processions in support of their candidates. NP staff were present in 11 Districts and were able to report to PAFFREL that violence, this time, had been minimal. There was only one report of violence in areas that NP covered.

Following this period most teams returned to their own field site areas to continue with pre-election monitoring. This usually involved visiting political party and polling officials and the security forces to inform them of the presence of monitors. ...

In the North East, where NP has three of its four offices, NP was also working with others to ensure that there was minimum disruption to residents in LTTE areas in the casting of their votes. Polling stations were not sited in LTTE areas, but in no man's land in between frontline LTTE and army positions. In the last general election in December 2001, large numbers of LTTE residents were prevented from visiting these polling stations by prolonged security checks by Government forces prior to voting. Observers this time sought to ensure that such events would not be repeated. Such preparatory work involved liaison through PAFFREL with the Government and the LTTE.

The intense pre-election week saw the arrival of about 90 further observers to work with PAFFREL. Amongst these were at least eight NP supporters from various parts of the world including one each from NP Japan and from NP Germany and three members of the Seattle Affinity Group. ... After briefings in Colombo, the teams dispersed to their sites with additional observers from overseas to NP field site areas and to the same North West and Central areas that had been covered during the pre-election period. In the couple of days before election day final preparations were made in co-ordination with PAFFREL district support staff, the European Union observers and other overseas observers.

Election day itself began for most teams before 6am as polling stations were open between 7am and 4pm. The work was hectic and exhausting since many individual teams covered more than 30 polling stations during the opening hours. Visits involved observing the general situation both inside and outside the stations and interviewing polling staff, the security forces, political agents and voters themselves. For the first time the Elections Commissioner had given approval for observers to enter polling stations, where they were generally warmly welcomed. In many areas observation work continued late into the night, accompanying ballot boxes to counting stations and, in at least one case, observing the counting of votes.

Despite the gloomiest of forecasts, the election was the most violence-free that Sri Lanka had had for some time. The existence of monitors in polling stations – generally PAFFREL had volunteers staffing the stations throughout the polling period – and very stringent Government security probably contributed to the generally smooth conduct of the poll. The principal election irregularity reported from several parts.⁶⁰

Over the years, NP got then involved in many elections, and though this work was never really considered to be in the core of what NP was about and there were concerns that NP might be confused with an election monitoring organization, the work on elections became one programmatic field which remained with NP until 2010.⁶¹ During the Presidential elections in November 2005 where NP, again in support of *Paffrel*, coordinated more than 100 international observers, with 15 FTMs plus 34 NP volunteers recruited from around the world.⁶² The same took place March 2008.⁶³ During provincial and municipal elections in some parts of the North (Vavuniya, Jaffna, Uva) 2009 NP cooperated with three national election monitoring groups, *PAFFREL*, *CaFFE* (*Campaign for Free and Fair Elections*) and *CMEV* (*Centre for Monitoring Election Violence*).⁶⁴ The last two elections NP got involved in monitoring were the Presidential elections

⁶⁰ Quoted from the NP Sri Lanka Report 2004.

⁶¹ Interview Atif Hameed].

⁶² PD Report 2005-9, PD Report 2005-11, Summary Report 2005. According to another source there were 45 volunteers recruited by NP (NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06)

⁶³ PD Report 2008-1, Paffrel & Nonviolent Peaceforce 2008

⁶⁴ EvaluationEMPP 2009.

end of January 2010, and Parliamentary in March 2010. Then four volunteer International Protection Officers (IPOs) were recruited to join existing international and national NPSL staff on the Election Observer Protection project, which was carried out in Batticaloa, Vavuniya, and Jaffna.⁶⁵ NP accompanied, protected, and trained 60 Sri Lankan election monitors.⁶⁶

2.3.2.2 *Armed conflict in the East*

In the first half of 2004, the split within the LTTE led to lots of tensions and violence in the East, with victims often being Tamils from Jaffna. The NP team tried to provide some protection by visiting known Jaffna contacts, and mobilizing its civil society contacts.⁶⁷

Another site of conflict was a river at the border between the Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts where an armed confrontation between LTTE and the Karuna group developed. The two NP teams in the two districts tried to work on the situation from both sides, often accompanying local clergy, NGOs and national staff from aid agencies, in order to protect the civilians caught in the middle. They were not able to prevent the outbreak of fighting on the 9th of April and the displacement of a large number of civilians. NP at the time was the only international NGO in the area of fighting and responded by relaying information to the rest of the NGO community in Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Colombo.

*They worked throughout the day facilitating a network between clergy, government officials and the army to ensure shelter, food and water for civilians walking 20 kilometres to the Government controlled area, which started just to the North of the Valaichchenai office. By the end of the day international humanitarian agencies had moved in to provide further shelter, food and sanitation.*⁶⁸

The teams also monitored demonstrations, did occasional accompaniment for local civil society and NGO members (e.g. when travelling to unsafe areas close to the border to LTTE territory), started to support an interethnic Peace Committee⁶⁹ in Mutur and accompanied citizens to authorities to file complaints. Also a first accompaniment for a human rights defender (HRD) took place in 2004⁷⁰, and slowly child recruitment developed as an issue for NP to work on (see 3.5). In the Valaichchenai area the team became instrumental in linking an outlying Tamil village with its neighbouring Muslim community and established a peace group that met regularly at the NP office to plan for ways to forestall future violence between the communities.⁷¹

2.4 Tsunami response

The Tsunami that hit Sri Lanka end of December 2004 changed the situation on the ground dramatically. The disaster had affected Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese alike, and the NP teams lived right in the middle of the areas where the Tsunami struck. In fact, one team member got injured when a building collapsed, a second suffered from a (fortunately light) heart attack, and several other team members escaped the water only through a series of lucky circumstances.

After it was quickly decided that NP would not try to raise money from the Tsunami because it was not a development organization, NP internationally raised 133,000 USD from individuals to hand over to *Sarvodaya* to support locally based rebuilding efforts.⁷² On the ground, NPSL tried

⁶⁵ January 2010 Sri Lanka Report.

⁶⁶ Nonviolent Peaceforce 2010 Accomplishments.

⁶⁷ Annual Report 2004.

⁶⁸ Annual Report 2004.

⁶⁹ *Peace Committees* were structures created earlier by the government. However, in many places they were dormant.

⁷⁰ Interview.

⁷¹ Schweitzer 2004c.

⁷² Interview Mel Duncan.

to make itself useful. The situation certainly was a challenge for an INGO that did not have any material goods to deliver, nor had special skills for relief among its staff. Nevertheless, according to the reports written at that time, NPSL was able to find a useful role in that time.⁷³ In response to the situation, NPSL's mandate was widened for a certain time:

A To provide non-violent protection to affected communities and groups, including Sri Lankan relief and reconstruction workers, to enable them to live and carry out their work in freedom from actual or threatened armed, political or physical interference or violence

B To monitor in areas where NP is active and provide information by the issuing of regular written and verbal reports to concerned parties:

- 1) To identify relief and reconstruction activities that promote inclusivity and community participation as well as to identify activities where harm is being caused by partisan and excluding practices*
- 2) To assist agencies new to areas where NP operates to pursue such principles of community inclusivity and participation*
- 3) To identify improvements or deterioration in the underlying national and local conflicts that the current peace process is intended to address*

C To encourage and support community involvement in relief and reconstruction activities not only to promote the fundamental human rights to food and shelter but also to promote communal harmony and a Sri Lanka at peace.⁷⁴

Case 2: Supporting Relief Efforts

Shortly after the tsunami struck teams in the North East became active in playing their role in working with Sri Lankans to rebuild shattered communities in the vicinity of field sites. Initially much of the work involved providing accompaniment and transport to individuals and groups trying to bring relief to beleaguered communities as soon as possible. However as it soon became apparent that in many areas there was an over-supply of relief with very little co-ordination of activities by the Government, Sri Lankan and international groups and individuals, the role for an organization committed to promoting human rights and peace with justice became more apparent.

After consultation with Sri Lankan NGOs and others both nationally and at the local level, it became apparent that it would be useful to add monitoring and reporting to NP's mandate activities. Teams from Jaffna to Matara have been making extensive visits to affected communities both at the request of Sri Lankan individuals and groups and on their own initiative. As a result of this, FTMs on several occasions have been able to discover areas where either relief was not being equitably distributed or reaching the intended victims. Building on NP's reputation for visiting areas less frequented by international agencies, FTMs have been able to put their local knowledge to good use in these areas. At the time of writing the type of monitoring and reporting best suited to the communities' needs is in the process of being worked out. It is likely that NP will work closely with the Human Rights Commission's recently started monitoring project. In addition, NP has been approached by the UN Humanitarian Information Centre to explore ways in which human rights reporting can be included in the weekly reports produced by the centre on the humanitarian situation.

In the Batticaloa District FTMs have been working with local activists to raise the inclusivity of Sri Lankan NGOs and the affected communities in decision making on relief and reconstruction. As yet impact in this area is difficult to discern since the general trend is still very much for the Government, the LTTE and the international agencies to act with very little consultation with affected communities. However, already FTMs have successfully intervened to promote the voice of forgotten communities in the relief and reconstruction effort. For example in an area where Muslims were significantly affected an FTM noticed that no Muslims were included in the original composition of the local relief and reconstruction co-

⁷³ NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06.

⁷⁴ Schweitzer 2005b.

*ordinating committees. Following an intervention with the LTTE and INGO representatives, Muslims were appointed to these committees.*⁷⁵

2.5 2005 – 2009: A wide range of protection activities

In early 2005, NP conducted a review of its work in Sri Lanka. The review consisted first of a field visit conducted by the Country Director, the NP Program Director and a Sri Lankan consultant. The report of that field visit was then used as grounds for a review workshop in May where most NPSL staff and a smaller number of representatives of NP international came together to discuss the findings. Questions of decision-making and leadership played an important role as did the mandate of the project, and how well the current activities fitted into it. As one FTM at the time is quoted in the minutes of the review:

*[We] do a lot of humanitarian work. For example connecting people to agencies, accompanying relief workers after Tsunami (not because of security threats). Became part of our work. Then the three methods were pushed aside. Some of us began questioning if it was part of our work to support humanitarian agencies. How do we harmonize all this with the stated methods, or with nonviolent peacekeeping?*⁷⁶

2.5.1 Mandate changed twice more

In the end, it was suggested – and eventually approved by the IGC to rewrite the mandate to make it shorter and less redundant.

Mandate: Reduce and prevent violence to increase the safety of civilians in Sri Lanka so they can contribute to a lasting peace with justice.

Objectives:

1. *Reduce the level, and potential for, and prevent violence.*
2. *To support and improve the safety, confidence and ability of Sri Lankan peacemakers and other civilians to address conflict in nonviolent ways.*
3. *Work with Sri Lankans to deter resumption of violent conflict.*⁷⁷

This mandate was then approved by the IGC⁷⁸) and remained valid until 2007.⁷⁹

In 2007, a new formulation can be found in the public reports:

NPSL has three major objectives:

1. *Build the confidence of local organizations and individuals to address issues of human rights, peace, and justice with authorities at all levels.*
2. *Provide space and opportunity for networks to function at the community level, preventing or limiting violence.*
3. *Facilitate coordinated action for security at community, district, national, and international levels.*⁸⁰

The difference to the 2005 mandate clearly is that there was no hope anymore to be able to “deter the resumption of violent conflict”. Instead, it reflects the growing realization that it was the grassroots’ level where NP had the capacity to become effective.

⁷⁵ Sri Lanka Project Report 2005 1/2-3.

⁷⁶ Discussion of topics 3rd day 2005. The three methods this quote refers to were accompaniment, monitoring and presence.

⁷⁷ Schweitzer 2005a.

⁷⁸ PD Report 2005-8.

⁷⁹ de Witte 2007:17, Hebib/Berndt 2007:64pp.

⁸⁰ Annual Report 2007:3, PD Report 2008-2.

2.5.2 The project grows and matures

After the review in May 2005, NPSL started to implement a number of changes, both in regard to streamlining its activities (see below) and in improving its structure by introducing line-management at the team level with the new role of Team Coordinators, and also hiring some more staff to take care of the growing administrative tasks in Colombo. The office in Matara was finally closed in 2005,

*... because no actual security threats that NPSL could address were observed. NPSL found it difficult to develop its role in a Sinhala majority area in the South.*⁸¹

A new team/office was opened in September 2005 in Trincomalee town, and another one in March 2006 in Batticaloa town so that the number of field offices increased over the year 2006 from three to five.⁸²

At the end of 2005, the situation in Sri Lanka changed after the Presidential elections – violence became much more widespread though officially the CFA remained in place until early 2008. Direct attacks on army and navy personnel, including claymore mine attacks, increased as did political assassinations. There was communal violence and clashes in bordering villages, harassment particularly of Tamil citizens, additional army check points and generally intensified security measures including night searches of houses and detentions of hundreds of civilians.⁸³

In 2006, the work in Mutur got interrupted when a grenade was thrown at the team house, injuring one of the FTMs who fortunately was not seriously injured and recovered completely. A report reflects the sentiment of that time:

*The attack, which was part of a coordinated act of violence against three INGO offices in Mutur, transmitted a major shock wave through the INGO community in Sri Lanka. A series of strong condemnations by international governments, the EU, the UN and others followed, in which a full police investigation and security were demanded from the government. No longer can INGOs and international staff take it for granted that they are safe. The local staff of international organizations had already been under a great deal of threat with the murder of the one local employee of the Norwegian Refugee Council as the latest example in a number of NGO/INGO staff killings. In fact, INGOs have now become political players in the conflict, hence they are required to take into account the safety of their staff and negotiate the reduced (humanitarian) space in which they operate. For NPSL, the attack raised a number of questions, among others about the safety of the international staff and the risks involved for local staff. For the moment, NPSL is keeping a lower profile in Mutur but works in coordination with other international actors on the ground while at the same time it is trying to increase pressure on the government through its international network.*⁸⁴

The grenade in Mutur did not remain the only though the most serious security-related incident in that time. A couple of times NP vehicles were attacked by mobs, NP received threatening letters, and once a grenade was planted in a vehicle that was driven by two national staff who got arrested until they were weeks later acquitted by court. In response to the worsening of the security situation and the first incidents of attacks against internationals including NP, security measures became much more elaborate.⁸⁵

To summarize the most important internal changes NPSL underwent in and after 2005:

- The successful completion of the review was one of the last activities of the first Country Director. He left NP management after two years to return to community-based work in the East, and was replaced by a new international from the Netherlands.

⁸¹ Hebib & Berndt 2007:14.

⁸² Program Committee 2006c.

⁸³ NPSL Activity report 2006.

⁸⁴ NPSL Activity report 2006.

⁸⁵ Hebib & Berndt 2007:34-35. This is elaborated in the internal report.

- NP finally managed to get registered as a Voluntary Social Service / NGO organization.⁸⁶
- A 'second wave' of personnel arrived in Sri Lanka mid-2005 to increase the total numbers and replacing FTMs whose 2-year contracts had come to an end and who did not choose to extend their contracts. At the end of 2005 NP had 30 project staff in Sri Lanka.⁸⁷ End of June 2006 a third group of 12 FTMs arrived.⁸⁸ Between October 2005 and March 2006, the project had more than doubled its staff to an average of 22-23 FTMs.
- As NP's pilot project, the project in Sri Lanka had been originally planned for a period of three years. However, there were different understandings among board and staff of NP what that meant – if there would be a quasi-automatic closure after three years, or just an evaluation if to stay on.⁸⁹ In the end, the IGC decided in 2005 that NPSL would continue and be reviewed at an annual basis.
- Another new feature was the inception of particular programs or projects, funded by a particular donor. This process started in 2005 with a cooperation with UNICEF on child protection.⁹⁰
- A very important change was that NPSL started to recruit Sri Lankan staff not only for office positions and as translators, but created more qualified field officer positions for Sri Lankans, whose responsibilities then were not that different from that of the international field team members. (Though NPSL never took the step to create National Civilian Peacekeeper positions as it did in later projects in the Philippines and South Sudan.)
- In 2007, following a three month assessment between September and December 2006, it was decided that the work and the available resources of NP would be better and more effectively utilized if the two teams in the Trincomalee District were merged into one district team each and organized themselves to work in both Trinco and Mutur offices. This transition was completed by mid-March 2007.⁹¹
- The same year the Colombo Response Team (CRT) was created and staffed initially with one FTM. The reason for adding this programmatic component to the earlier purely administrative Colombo office was the need for the teams in the East and North to link their grassroots work to other levels and sectors – government, national NGOs, international agencies and Embassies -, and for that purpose to have a counterpart in Colombo. The CRT later became the human rights defenders (HRD) unit of NP⁹² and became involved in a number of protective accompaniments of HRDs in Colombo.⁹³
- The Jaffna team remained a small team during most of the years. Frequently they had only one FTM and on occasions no FTMs and the office was closed. After a review completed at the end of 2005, it was decided to reinvest and restart the Jaffna program. This commenced when the Jaffna office reopened in the middle of January 2006, and started with hiring a Field Officer who had previously worked with the team and had been completing some of the duties already.⁹⁴ Later in 2007/08 however there were new periods when no international staff was able to work in Jaffna which with the escalation of the war in the North became more and more difficult to enter for internationals.

⁸⁶ Registration 2005.

⁸⁷ de Witte 2005:15

⁸⁸ NPSL Activity report 2006.

⁸⁹ See: Discussion of topics 3rd day 2005

⁹⁰ PD Report 2005-10.

⁹¹ NPSL Quarterly Report 1-10 2007.

⁹² NPSL Quarterly Report 1-10 2007, PD Report 2008-3.

⁹³ It provided 20-30 accompaniments each month, according to the Annual Report 2008:3.

⁹⁴ NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06 and 1-10 2007

2.5.3 Activities

The review workshop in May 2005 clearly formulated as a result that it had not been appropriate to try to summarize what NP was doing under three broad categories of “presence”, “accompaniment” and “monitoring”, but that there was a much longer list of generic activities:

- *Connecting people to resources*
- *Linking CBOs with national NGOs and IOs*
- *Linking people with local leaders / authorities*
- *Networking CBOs in different places with each other, making them known to other people*
- *Accompanying activists or other threatened people*
- *Presence at events or places at risk*
- *Facilitation within or between communities*
- *Documentation*
- *Support of local groups and individuals*
- *Monitoring and fact finding*
- *Visiting*
- *Consulting with local activists and people in general on options what to do in crisis*
- *Provide safe places to meet*
- *Introduce INGOs and IOs (SLMM for example) to the area.*⁹⁵

By the end of 2005, there were also clearly some main issues or areas of work that NPSL focused on most, besides dealing with various other types of threats of violence: Child protection, ethnic or other conflict in and between communities in the East, IDP protection and support and protection of human rights defenders.⁹⁶

2.5.3.1 Child protection

The probably most important area of work in those years has been child protection, meaning in the Sri Lankan context the protection of children and youth who were threatened with abduction and forced recruitment by the LTTE or the split-away Karuna group. When NP arrived in Sri Lanka, recruitment of child soldiers was a taboo nobody in the communities talked about. NP was one of few groups and agencies (UNICEF being the most important) who found ways to raise the issue, opened space to discuss and to take action.⁹⁷ Though of course this cannot be attributed to NP alone, eventually the government launched a ‘take back the child’ campaign, and similarly NP played later a role in developing mechanisms to deal with larger numbers of demobilized child soldiers after the war (see below 2.6).

Case 3: Child protection

*Child protection became a programmatic area already in 2004 when NP started to collaborate with UNICEF. In January 2006, NP and UNICEF signed an official partnership agreement.*⁹⁸

In 2006/2007, NPSL received a large number of complaints by parents whose children had been forcibly abducted. In particularly the areas controlled by the government, where the so-called Karuna group operates with the support of the security forces, hundreds of abductions took place. NPSL listened to the families

⁹⁵ Program Committee 2005:4; the same list is quoted in de Witte 2007:19-20.

⁹⁶ Plus the already mentioned election monitoring whenever elections came up.

⁹⁷ Interview.

⁹⁸ NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06.

who visited its offices in Batticaloa and Valaichchenai and asked them to document their stories and informed them about options available to them. They included but were not limited to: 1. introducing the family to the so-called family support groups which NPSL and local partners initiated; 2. accompanying parents to file complaints with the police and the Human Rights Commission (HRC); and 3. referring them to other protection actors such as UNICEF and ICRC or SLMM.

The office of NPSL in Valaichchenai was often used as a safe meeting place for family gatherings. These meetings became larger (up to around 100 families) and more frequent over time and were adopted as family support meetings in which families could speak openly about their problems and share experiences. Local partners of NPSL facilitated such meetings and spoke to the families about relevant developments regarding particular actions taken, e.g. letters to TMVP, and general information sharing on, for example, the TMVP code of conduct regarding children in its ranks or LTTE child rights act and its guarantees on child releases. NPSL supported specific activities that were taken as a result of the meetings. For example, around forty families made a collective decision to file a petition with the Supreme Court in which they stated that they were not receiving equal protection as stipulated under article 12 of the Constitution. Other examples included protective presence during protests carried out by mothers in front of the TMVP offices or accompaniment of representatives of the mother support groups to meet the international protection agencies such as SLMM, ICRC and UNICEF to ask critical questions and to inform themselves. Considering the high level of fear these were difficult steps to take for these vulnerable families. NPSL's facilitative and supportive efforts increased their confidence to do so.

Further involvement with families and due to the lack of response by state actors led NPSL to engage in face-to-face with the TMVP. It initially accompanied families to TMVP offices in Batticaloa, followed by direct engagement with the TMVP, although still on behalf of families, and eventually NPSL facilitated families to meet the TMVP in Colombo.

NPSL has also been approached by families whose children are at risk of being (re-)recruited or those who have escaped from the armed groups. In such cases, NPSL was able to link the families to particular safe locations or training centers where children are relatively safe and receive vocational training and room and board.⁹⁹ NPSL continued to monitor their presence in the center in case of need.

NPSL is the custodian of a family and community support fund and was able to support families unable to pay for the safe locations or their transportation to offices of armed groups or to the offices of international and national actors providing protection services.

Outside the family involvement, NPSL raised protection issues with local authorities including police and military either independently or together with other international and local partners that expressed concern about the safety of children in the communities. NPSL removed certain obstacles that people faced when interacting with the authorities. For example, a police demand for families' to write formal requests before receiving a copy of their complaint was withdrawn after NPSL's interference.

The NPSL efforts served to complement to collective efforts taken by families. NPSL was also able to involve the HRC in Colombo on so-called surrenderees who were placed into prison in Kandy instead of receiving proper care and rehabilitation. The HRC took these cases up with the Ministry of Justice and the prison authorities.

The level of fear by the families to report has been extremely high so NPSL raised the issues with police and military who are responsible for the security in the areas. At one point an armed group prevented a mother and child from visiting the NPSL office in Valaichchenai. NPSL brought this to the attention of the local commander and held talks with the armed group about the incident. This resulted in an apology to the mother by the group member that made the threat. Such a response is rare and many incidents continue to take place while those who try to speak openly are being silenced or threatened including the staff of international agencies.

⁹⁹ For example introducing boys to a vocational training centre where they would follow a year long program with room and board. See PD report January 2007.

From a more preventive perspective, NPSL on several occasions used its emergency response to be present in areas triggered by early warning signs of abductions. Because of the sensitivities involved, NPSL, SLMM and ICRC and UNICEF took such initiatives together to distribute the risk among the participating agencies.¹⁰⁰

Another report from the period describes more in detail the way in which NP's work contributed to the empowerment of local actors:

In 2006, a large group of Tamil mothers in the East whose children had been forcibly recruited by an armed group in government-controlled areas meet over several months at NP offices. With the help of local peaceworkers supported by NP, they decide to work together to break the pervasive silence on under-aged and forced conscription. Forty-eight of them make police entries, some after repeated attempts. Some are pressured to not name a perpetrator but they stand firm. They boldly decide to "raise their profile" by filing a joint petition to the national Human Rights Commission, copying relevant authorities up to the President of Sri Lanka and the Supreme Court. No tangible progress or investigation is made on their cases. Over time, some of the children escape from the armed group as the power structures shift in the District. At least two of the children are killed in battle. Later the Mothers make a public appeal and stage a silent vigil in front of NP's office on International Peace Day in 2007. Parents whose children have managed to return stand in solidarity with mothers whose children are still missing. This is a dramatic shift from the culture of silence. Two years later they are still meeting, engaging in joint activities and mutual support. In March 2008 they launch a publication of poems describing the pain of losing a child to an armed group, translated in Tamil, Sinhala and English. A mother reports sharing it at an Army checkpoint. One soldier shows it another, who reads the Sinhalese and comments: 'Our mothers must feel the same for us.'¹⁰¹

As can be seen, NP used various techniques in order to protect the children and their families. What can be clearly discerned from the reports is that the basis of it all were good relations that the NP teams built up with multiple actors in the communities:

Although one boy had been released after an appeal by NP to the TMVP in Colombo, at the local level armed Karuna gangs are showing their full muscle and actually have stepped up the recruitment of children. In one incident a boy ran into one of the NP offices seeking safety from his followers. A short stand off took place in the office but was resolved when NP staff called the head of the armed group who instructed his men to leave. It shows that our efforts to seek the dialogue with armed groups can create a level of understanding.¹⁰²

In 2008, child soldiers started surrendering in large numbers, and were arrested. The government did not know for a long time how many kids they had in custody. UNICEF eventually asked NP to be on a Steering Committee to work with the National Child Protection Board. The challenge was to develop mechanisms of care and referral. Until then it was left to individual magistrates to decide what to do with the children – some sent them home, others were to remain in jail. (At one point, NP saw about 60 youth in two jail cells.) In the end, and NP played a role in that, a referral system was created which involved a governmental probation officer as well as the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and various agencies.¹⁰³

2.5.3.2 Preventing violence and facilitating dialogue in communities

In the East of Sri Lanka there was not only the conflict between the LTTE and the Karuna faction, but long preceding this tensions and conflicts between Muslim and Tamil communities.

¹⁰⁰ Completion Report to Oxfam Australia 2007. Compare also: Hebib & Berndt 2007:27, Aseervatham 2009.

¹⁰¹ Key indications of impacts 2008.

¹⁰² PD Report 2007-7.

¹⁰³ Interview. The NCPA had been founded already in 1998. See <http://www.childprotection.gov.lk/index.php/about-us/history-of-the-ncpa> [27.7.2012].

In some places there were mostly mono-ethnic villages, in others (like Valaichchenai) both ethnic groups shared one town, though usually living in segregated areas. Violent incidents easily and repeatedly led to fighting and killings with a number of casualties on all sides involved.

NP was aware of this issue from the beginning, and had chosen to work in the East of Sri Lanka partly for that reason.

Case 4: Community Violence Mediation

Mutur, District of Trincomalee: In the first days of December [2005] a Muslim community leader and politician was shot down in the town. There was an immediate rise of hostilities, calls for revenge, surfacing of hatred in some and fear in the majority of the population. A cycle of revenge started which included Muslim civilians attacking an auto and killing its Tamil occupants. Muslims who had travelled from 'their areas' to work in Tamil areas were trapped and victims of revenge. Within a day 8 people were killed in such revenge killings and 7 people went missing. In government controlled areas, the patch-work nature of the Muslim-Tamil villages made travel difficult or impossible for many and there was a deadlock in communications between the communities. Families who lived on the border of their communities started to move away and approximately 1400 families were displaced. In addition, the area has many vulnerable families who immediately lost their income, including day-wage earners and farmers.

The NP Mutur team started monitoring and using their mobility and network of contacts to begin shuttle diplomacy right away. Initially they were relaying information and concerns about vulnerable people or civilians trapped outside of their communities. Later they facilitated the meeting of Tamil and Muslim leaders. On request of Muslim families in Thupour, NP provided presence and accompaniment to approximately 50 fisherman and woodcutters trapped in LTTE controlled areas. NP also accompanied the spiritual leader of Mutur while he attempted to visit his people and calm the situation down. At scenes such as the hospital, where angry civilians received the bodies of the victims, the communities' leader was much needed to offer support and counter the calls for further revenge.

NP met with the Mutur Peace Committee and joined them while they worked to come up with an emergency plan to end the crises peacefully. A Tamil-Muslim action committee was formed to achieve this. NP supported them with actions like travelling through the checkpoints to LTTE controlled areas twice to convey the plan and interest in a nonviolent solution to the LTTE political head. Through their network of contacts they were alerted to particular threats of escalation or further violence, such as places that needed more security (request relayed to security forces) or youth who were agitating a near-by Tamil community (concern conveyed to their community leaders/elders.)

In the outlying areas NP Mutur visited local respected persons in Tamil and Muslim villages. Initially they just did communication exchanges and listened to their situation, but later they facilitated two meetings with the leaders whose communities were mutually fearful of each other.

Once the situation allowed, there was a collaborative effort by NP, SLMM and FCE (Foundation for Co-Existence) to support the meeting of peace committee members, including the president who is the spiritual leader of Muslims in Mutur, to meet with the political leader of the LTTE in the area. NP transported the Peace Committee members to the meeting. In the meeting a Memorandum of Understanding was struck to work to end the violence. Both Muslim and Tamil community leaders agreed to use their communication channels to announce an end to the violence.

The NP Trinco and NP Mutur teams worked together to convey the immediate needs of the affected civilians to other agencies and accompanied local and international agencies to the areas to give their relief and support. The NP Trinco team used the information they received from NP Mutur, at one point bringing the information by boat when the communications broke down. The NP Trinco team worked with the UN coordinating body OCHA, international agencies and local agencies to transform the information into a needs assessment, appeal for support and plan of action. The two NP teams coordinated to accompany local and international agencies for support, safety and because of our familiarity with the

*people/ area. They also accompanied a doctor and nurse who wanted to visit a few children in the area who were ill but unable to attain any medical services.*¹⁰⁴

The Mutur mediation efforts were not the only case NPSL dealt with over the years. There have been other cases, like a crisis that developed in Trincomalee around a Buddha statue erected by Sinhalese and protested against by Tamils in 2005, and mediation in the same area in 2005 that concerned two Fishermen's Union, a Tamil and a Muslim one¹⁰⁵.

A week or so before Wesak, the annual celebration of the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha, a medium-sized Buddha statue appeared on one of the main thoroughfares, erected by the Sinhala Auto Drivers Association. Tamil Hindus were outraged and tensions rose. Tamils demanded the removal of the statue. Tamil People's Forum (a representative Tamil body) called for several days of Hartal (a shut down of activity) that led to communal clashes which resulted in 1 death, several injuries and destruction of private and public property. Many Tamil families living surrounded by Sinhala people went to stay in areas dominated by Tamils. Sri Lankan security forces from outside Trincomalee were brought in, a move that generated some fear among the Tamil community.

During the Hartal, there were explosions in both Tamil and Sinhala areas. Nonviolent Peaceforce field team members moved into Trincomalee and did peace patrolling, providing conscious presence, and rapid response to incidents. The NP members also developed connections with the communities, security forces and key elements of the civil society. Nonviolent Peaceforce worked in close collaboration with the Norwegian ceasefire monitoring mission and other international and local groups to try to defuse the situation. These efforts included outreach to Tamil People's forum and Buddhist peace advocates, including a well-known peace monk who sought NP's support to meet the leaders of the Tamil community to initiate the dialogue process to reduce the community tension.

...

*A NP Vehicle was stopped forcefully by more than 20 highly charged up Sinhala youth near the statue. They banged [on the] NP vehicle and accused NP for facilitating a meeting between Buddhist monk and LTTE political head. They criticized INGOs of being biased. The field team members present on the spot preferred to talk to them rather than running away. [They] carefully listened to the grievances of the angry mob and clarified the misunderstandings. After one hour discussions, the mob said sorry to NP field team members for misbehaving and banging the vehicle. They asked NP to visit anytime in their areas.*¹⁰⁶

Inter-community conflicts in the Batticaloa district played a role until right after the time of the war.¹⁰⁷ There,

*whenever ... an incident happens the local Interfaith Committees engage with NPSL to gather and find nonviolent solutions with all the parties involved, for example at a time of tension between Muslims and Tamils due to killings of members of both communities in June 2008. This tension quickly spread to other parts of the district and led to large displacements. NPSL with religious leaders arranged a round-table meeting in the Chenkalady Divisional Secretariat. There the religious leaders took the lead in addressing the problem, tackling solutions together with government authorities and members of armed groups to reduce the tension between the communities.*¹⁰⁸

Besides these emergency mediations, NP sought to strengthen community structures to enable the communities to deal with tensions and conflicts. There were two major programmatic activities around this objective: supporting the set-up of early warning systems, and working with the already-mentioned Peace Committees, especially the one in Mutur.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06.

¹⁰⁵ Review Visit 2005:2-5, NPSL Quarterly Report 1/4 2005.

¹⁰⁶ NPSL Quarterly Report 1/4 2005. See also Richard 2005.

¹⁰⁷ NPSL Activity report 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Aseervatham 2009:21.

¹⁰⁹ Review Visit 2005:2-5, PD Report 2005-12, PD Report 2007-3.

Case 5: Support of local Peace Committees

Much of the program and activities of the team focused on supporting the peace initiatives of partner organizations including the Peace Committees. Because of the displacements and disruption in community life, many peace committees disintegrated or were unable to function in recent months. In some areas where people are now returning to their homes and beginning to re-establish community ties, the team is supporting efforts to re-invigorate and support those peace committee members who are ready to take up their community peace work again. In some cases, the team is able to connect peace committees with other partners who can provide trainings in human rights and other capacity-building initiatives to provide a focus and increase the longer-term impact for the committees. A key challenge in working with the Peace Committees is the heavy role that the police play in the formation and functioning of the committees. In an ethnically-charged environment like Trinco, where all three communities feel imperilled and have their own grievances, perceived collaboration with the police can prove to be a liability in other areas of the work.¹¹⁰

The violence in the district caused displacement in Sangama, a model village built by GoSL for all 3 communities to live in. They have lived peacefully for the last 16 years, including throughout the war. After a killing in the area and subsequent accusations of harassment by the Sri Lankan Army, 54 Tamil families displaced to a church and Sinhala families remaining felt exposed to retaliation from armed groups and angry at the effect of violence on their community. NP worked with humanitarian organizations to identify and support the displaced families. Our team brought the Sinhala leader of a nearby peace committee working in the area to visit the displaced Tamil families to see for himself the situation and to discuss their fears. They were fearful of the army. The peace committee and NP helped to arrange a meeting between the IDPs, the peace committee, the security forces, and Sinhala members of the community that were not displaced. An agreement was reached that the military would only conduct searches while accompanied by the police whom the people trust more. The SSP (police) agreed to set a police post near/in the community so the civilians could work with officers they were familiar with. They also agreed to have two women on duty at the post, which increased the capacity of civilians to reach out to police for issues concerning the protection of women and children. The IDPs felt confident and have returned to the village.¹¹¹

However, as soon as the Mutur team got back to their office, it received calls for help from members of the Mutur Peace Committee. A claymore mine attack that killed a home guard, sparked army round-ups in the area followed by home guards retaliating against Tamil villagers. The home guards started burning and looting their houses, beating them with sticks and bats and killing one Tamil man. The Mutur team accompanied members of the Peace Committee to the area to assess the damage and document the atrocities including reports of sexual abuse. In collaboration with the Peace Committee the team spoke with the authorities and security forces and discussed the situation with Tamil and Sinhala community. The fact that the Mutur Peace Committee was able to play a bridge building role, facilitating the communication between parties involved is highly significant and shows the commitment of its members during such difficult circumstances.¹¹²

Developing wider networks and to build more extensive “early warning networks” when and where violence might occur was one aspect of the work with the communities. In the Batticaloa district, a community information network (CIN) was created with the help of NP. It held monthly meetings and sent security-related messages out through NP.¹¹³ The basis of these

¹¹⁰ NPSL Quarterly Report 1-10 2007.

¹¹¹ NPSL Activityreport 2006.

¹¹² PD Report 2006-4.

¹¹³ Aseervatham 2009:23.

networks formed existing groups like the Rural Development Societies and other CBOs and included both Tamil and Muslims.¹¹⁴

2.5.3.3 IDP protection

In 2006, the fighting in the East caused a new wave of IDPs, many of whom came South to the Batticaloa district. Especially the Valaichchenai team saw itself forced to develop a new program around dealing with the protection needs of IDPs.

Case 6: Protecting IDPs

The influx of IDPs into the Batticaloa district from Trincomalee in addition to locally displaced people on the run from the shelling and other violence required NPSL to start assessing the vulnerability of the fleeing people. In several areas where IDP camps were set up, NPSL became the focal point regarding protection issues. NPSL's efforts concentrated on Manmunai, Chenkalady, Vinayagrapuram, Marunthanagar, Kiran, Eravur Pattu, Sittandi camps, Kalwankery, Kaluwankerny, Palacholai, Sabukadi camps, Muadivembu, Iyankani and St Theresa Church.

In particular, NPSL's role served to give support to local animators and camp managers and other community groups facing threats while working in IDP camps. These included women's groups and female social workers providing psychosocial care. NPSL also worked with IDP groups to increase their self-defense mechanism by providing access for them to local authorities and police, conducting accompaniments of people under threat and encourage them to take preventative measures to avoid abductions and killings taking place in the camps, usually at night and early morning.

Regular visits to vulnerable IDP camps served to decrease the fear that existed among IDPs and the local community based humanitarian workers in the camps. Due to NPSL's community connections, it was able to mobilize the host community to get involved. NPSL hosted a series of meetings and facilitated dialogue thereby addressing the needs of host families and IDPs. In predominately Muslim areas, additional efforts were made to ease tensions between the Tamil IDPs and the host Muslim community.

NPSL followed-up on incidents such as abductions in the IDP camps with the police and encouraged it to take a more proactive role regarding the protection of IDPs. In some cases, this led to more police patrol in the camps. It also raised security related issues with local administrators such as DS office and GS's. Local partners of Oxfam played a role in the discussing the protection issues within the IDP camps by organizing grassroots meetings. Much of these efforts happened in conjunction with a large network of community actors such as ESCO, Survivors Associated, PWA, YMCA and the international agencies whereby NPSL often played a crucial link between them.

The partnership between UNHCR and NPSL enhanced the effort to respond to the IDP influx. NPSL's flexibility to respond to a wide variety of protection issues that IDPs faced allowed it to play a catalyst role between the immediate needs of IDPs and the authorities and agencies in a position to respond.

IDP families visited our offices requesting assistance in case of abductions, arrests and killings. NPSL was able to connect these families to ongoing family support activities and also link them to safe places. Especially, people who fled from LTTE areas in Vakarai area were seeking assistance due to the close proximity of our office in Valaichchenai and the fact that it is the only international presence in the area. In this case, NPSL used its connections to the churches in that area to help the IDPs. It also assisted in the blood donation drive at the request of one of the church leaders. To prevent threat against Tamil youth taking part in the blood drive in the local hospital, NPSL was present during this exercise. When access in Vakarai was granted by the military, many of the IDP returns were facilitated by the NPSL office in Valaichchenai in conjunction with its local partners.

¹¹⁴ PD Report 2008-2, PD Report 2008-3.

In March, the GoSL started a campaign to resettle and return IDPs but the process was involuntary and completely led by the military. NPSL recorded a number of cases of intimidation, harassment, threats and physical violence by the security forces that were in charge of the forced return. NPSL shared the reports with the UNHCR led taskforce on IDP manipulation.

When NPSL used its emergency response to be present in a number of camps where IDPs were forced to return, no violations were observed. In a counter campaign, leaflets on the right to a voluntary return were distributed by INGOs and UN agencies. After resettlement the distribution of leaflets became the sole instrument to stay in touch with the people.

In total, NPSL responded to three waves of forced return through consistent monitoring and response to violence against IDPs. When IDPs were resettled back to areas in Trincomalee, NPSL teams in Batticaloa coordinated this with the teams in Trincomalee. In some cases, go-and-see visits were organized to facilitate the return..¹¹⁵

In Jaffna the NP team played an important role providing protective presence with IDPs in Alaipiddy in May 2006¹¹⁶, and developed a productive cooperation with the *Human Rights Commission* (a governmental body) in the area.¹¹⁷ In March 2006, the NP Jaffna team worked with the village level government official and the police to help resolve a conflict between two IDP communities which had developed around building materials. They heard the grievances and fears of the people in the villages, discussed the matters with the police and tried to have an active and visible presence in the communities.¹¹⁸ Similar activities also took place the next years, including the last phase of the war 2008-2009.

2.5.3.4 Supporting and protecting Human Rights Defenders

While at the beginning of NP's presence in Sri Lanka, work with human rights activists did only play a minor role, this programmatic area grew over the next years to eventually becoming one of the three remaining main programs in the time after war.

Support and protection of HRDs meant various activities for NP, the four most important ones being

- Protective accompaniment of HRDs when they travelled to meetings or to safe places if they had received death threats¹¹⁹,
- Helping the HRDs to link to international agencies and rapporteurs, Supporting the (governmental) *Human Rights Commission* in their work by offering protective accompaniment and by passing cases that NP came to learn about to them,¹²⁰ and
- Co-facilitating workshops and trainings for HRDs,
- Connecting HRDs in remote or isolated areas with human rights advocates from Colombo who had a wider range of organized support and resources.¹²¹

As to human rights reporting, NP did not do the monitoring and reporting directly, but NP played a role in making sure that HRDs had a chance to meet and submit reports and case-files they had prepared to visitors or at international meetings.

¹¹⁵ Completion Report to Oxfam Australia 2007. See also: Field Report: Sri Lanka Project. December 2006 Summary of November 9th NPSL Focus Group on IDPs and Our Work 2006.: NPSL-UNHCR- Objectives and Activities 2006.

¹¹⁶ Program Committee 2006c.

¹¹⁷ NPSL Activity report 2006.

¹¹⁸ NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06

PD Report 2006-9.

¹²⁰ NPSL Quarterly Report 1-7/8 2006, NPSL Quarterly Report 1-11 2007, PD Report 2008-2.

¹²¹ Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka: Supporting Human Rights Defenders 2008

Case 7: Linking Human Rights Defenders

In October 2006 the team worked with local peace activists to prepare information on the human rights situation for Mr. Ian Martin, special human rights advisor to the peace process. Women with missing sons and husbands who trusted NP and its partners had representatives actually met with Mr. Martin personally. NP Valaichchenai also participated with the Human Security Work Group in a separate meeting with Mr. Martin to highlight the impact of the violence on the work of IOs and humanitarian agencies and to further share the impact on local people of the factional fighting and insecurities in Batticaloa District. ... In all of the above, NP acted as a witness to the situation, retelling the stories that people have brought to our office and doing the necessary groundwork, trust building and organizing to introduce those families that were able to document the details. Our team acted as a catalyst to insure that these allies from outside of the district had access to the concerns of the citizenry of Batticaloa, including the victims, not just the officials. They could do this because of their trusted place embedded in the community, mixed with their privilege as an international peace NGO and their increased sense of safety while breaking the silence. NP was invited to work with the delegate within the Human Rights Commission on potential follow-up actions recommended by Ian Martin, and the subsequent reports and initiatives following these visitors reflect the efforts our team made. The impact of the visitors themselves is still to be determined.¹²²

2.5.3.5 Various other activities of violence prevention and protection

There were a number of other activities that NP undertook in these years:

- Newly added in 2005 was protective presence at temple festivals, mostly to deter forced recruitment of youth by the armed groups who often used the confusion during the festivals to kidnap young people.¹²³
- During the Peace Day that is celebrated in Sri Lanka every year on the 21 September, NPSL usually participated both in the planning and during the festivities.¹²⁴ To give an example from 2007:

*In Batticaloa, around 450 children and youth from three vocational training centers (VTCs) and some boys and girls from two orphanages attended the celebration that was actively supported by NP. Many boys and girls in these VTCs have experienced of violence and abduction by the armed groups. Many of them came to these centres through NP. There was an opening ceremony with lighting candles, songs and speeches. Speeches were delivered by a Muslim religious leader, by the heads of the VTCs and by a representative of NP. One 10 year old girl and one 15 year old boy presented a joint message for peace. Different activities for boys and girls took place throughout the day. There were painting and letter writing activities and sport activities such as football, volleyball, badminton, netball, baseball and “tug of peace”. For one day, these boys and girls, whose lives have been deeply affected by war, were just regular children playing without fear. It also brought together many of community partners creating a powerful momentum to continue the hard work they all involved in to make change in their communities.*¹²⁵

¹²² NPSL Activity report 2006. Compare also Program Committee 2006b. Similar activities took place around the visit of UN special rapporteur on torture, Manfred Novak, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour in 2007. See PD Report 2007-11.

¹²³ Furnari 2006:6-7, Passion 2005, NPSL Activity report 2006. Already in 2004 there may have been presence by NPSL at such festivals.

¹²⁴ Various PD reports.

¹²⁵ PD Report 2007-9.

- Slowly in 2005 a partnership started to develop with *Sarvodaya* when they initiated a Rapid Deployment Peace Brigade (RDPB) under the auspices of their Shanti Sena youth group.¹²⁶ In 2005 over 60 young people got trained for the RDPB in the Batticaloa district with the collaboration of the Valaichchenai team. NPSL management and *Sarvodaya* came to an understanding on how to serve as a resource for the RDPB in the future and a follow up proposal was being drafted.¹²⁷ In the end, this proposal however was unable to be implemented because neither *Sarvodaya* nor NP being faced with multiple tasks, did have the resources to prioritize it, and the RDPB was given up.¹²⁸
- The teams regularly visited villages and areas that were considered vulnerable for various reasons. By their presence, they helped to deescalate tensions between communities, gather information on incidents and child abductions and share information with other NGOs and agencies.¹²⁹
- NP dealt with a high number of cases on an individual basis, visiting and meeting families and individuals who they knew were vulnerable for one or the other reason. It was this kind of humanitarian proactive presence that many beneficiaries still remember about NP:

¹²⁶ Passion 2005, Interview Rita Webb.

¹²⁷ PD Report 2006-2.

¹²⁸ Comment Rita Webb on first draft of this study.

¹²⁹ NPSL Quarterly report 1/5 2005.

Case 8: Proactive presence

‘I am a widow; my husband was round up and killed in 1988. My children being like orphans without parents. After that I escaped from there and surrendered to the ‘Monitoring committee’ in Trincomalee. They informed about me to Human Rights Commission and Red Cross and gave protection to me. Then since my situation got worse I returned to Batticaloa and worked in []; at that time I was arrested again by army and kept in Batticaloa police, Kalmunai Police, ... CID, Pusa Camp and Welikada prison and after 4 years I was released on [end of 2010].

Although I am released and 3 months passed I am again facing threats, again and again coming and making problems to me. But, after I was abducted, no one i.e. neighbours, relations, taken care about my children, parents and siblings. They were being like orphans. It is “Nonviolent Peaceforce” who came to my house, they had come 6-7 times and consoled my children’s mind, encourage them to not to worry and be at home without fears (built their confidence) met with related officers in army camps regarding the problem and reduce the threat to the family, protected my children and helped them, we never forget those helps.”

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- In Jaffna, the situation was different insofar as the city was a GOSL-controlled enclave in LTTE territory, and the LTTE had control over most of what happened in the town. Low-key violence was an almost daily occurrence. LTTE cadres attacked security forces, and these responded with searches and arrests of civilians in the area. Many civilians got displaced in order to maintain high security zones in and around Jaffna.

Case 9: Fact-finding and rumour control

In Jaffna and the Northern district, public assassinations of civilians rose dramatically in the last months of 2005. Some were killed for breaking tax or other policies of the LTTE, while other killings were done in public and/or politically motivated, including the killing of two school principals followed by public outrage and student unrest. Most of these shootings in the northern province in the end of 2005 were generally attributed to the LTTE, though not all. No arrests were made, leading the local head of the Human Rights Commission to write a complaint to the security forces about the killing with impunity. Subsequently he faced anonymous threats.

Jaffna has a relatively strong desk office of the Human Rights Commission and several local or international organizations who in some way strive to work on human rights, though not all of the organizations work together or have a strong relationship. Groups face barriers of different affiliations or mistrust.

Though the NP Jaffna remained a small team in 2005, they did a lot of fact finding during this time regarding human rights and the violence in the district. NP focused on the need identified by local actors to stay in touch with the different actors interested in human rights. They were frequently given information and they shared information, travelled with partners, and met with representatives of the government, the security forces and the LTTE. They sometimes directly introduced people, but also generally tried to act as a connecting thread in their network. They also want to offer support to Sri Lankan agencies who fear sometimes speaking freely about all human rights issues. There is much less political space to talk about human rights abuses from the LTTE openly, and a perceived threat of addressing human rights abuses of the security forces for fear that it brands you a ‘LTTE sympathizer’ by the government.

When the NP Jaffna team travelled to the scenes of incidents, visited families and contacts or different organizations it was often revealed that the quick explanation for the death or shooting of a civilian in the media didn’t match the facts under the surface. This information sharing was important because the environment in January was very pessimistic and civilians were angry and frustrated. They came to the streets when stories circulated of acts of aggression or violence against Tamil civilians by security forces, but

130 MSC - A Widow's story 2011.

*this energy was occasionally misused and misinformation was spread. Speculation about acts of aggression against civilians by the LTTE just led to greater insecurity. They particularly worked with the Human Right Commission in the end of 2005 either travelling together or trying to complement each others' efforts and strengths.*¹³¹

2.1.5.6 Staying on during the last period of the war 2008-2009

The year 2008 was in many ways not a good one for NPSL. Not only did the fully escalated war in the North worsen the situation on the ground also in the East, and make work in Jaffna next to impossible, but also NP failed for a combination of health and other reasons to replace the outgoing second Country Director who finished his two-year term in late 2007 with a permanent new one. From middle of 2008 on several interim directors, partly recruited from the project, partly from NP management, replaced each other. Only by middle of September 2009, a new regular Country Director was recruited.

Work-wise, there was no apparent rupture between the time period 2005-2007 described above, and the time during the last phase of the war after GOSL had formally ended the CFA. The main reason was that NP anyway had no direct presence in the areas in the Northeast mostly affected by the fighting, and no access to them because the government had closed off all these areas to (I)NGOs. And secondly, the violence in the East had already escalated during the two years before.

One important area of work during the war were dealing with children and youth and their families who were at threat, either of recruitment or because some family member had been with an armed group earlier. NPSL teams coordinated activities with government authorities such as child protection units, probation officers and district secretaries as well as with UNICEF, national and local NGOs and CBOs and with vocational training centres and other youth-serving facilities. As a report from that period emphasises, NPSL's focus

*was to support individual cases such as mothers searching for children or youth recently released or escaped from armed groups, and at the same time to strengthen the capabilities of local mechanisms to protect the safety and rights of children and their families.*¹³²

A second continuing area of concern were IDPs. NP monitored regularly and provided protective presence at critical times in a number of camps, in particular some more rural and hard-to-reach camps where other humanitarian staff was unable to visit or was concerned for its security if they went there. In addition NPSL helped to bring attention to some of the tensions involved in resettlement.

The third area was the protection and promotion of human rights in an environment where political murders became more and more frequent¹³³. Teams provided both short and long term accompaniment to individuals and families to assist them to use existing mechanisms (e.g. local civil authorities) to inquire about missing relatives, to access youth-serving facilities, and to move to longer term safer places. In Colombo, NP worked both with HRDs and started to work with threatened journalists.¹³⁴ Reports from the period show that each team dealt with an average of 10 new cases (families, threatened youth, HRDs) every month.¹³⁵

In early 2009, the office in Trincomalee was closed after a period of phasing out from the District that began in October 2008. The main reason was that the Government Agent (GA) responsible for the District had started to disagree with the presence of international FTMs in his district.

¹³¹ NPSL Quarterly report 10-3 2005/06.

¹³² NPSL Programme Report 2008-10.

¹³³ NPSL Program Report 2008-11.

¹³⁴ NPSL Program Report 2008-10.

¹³⁵ Field Report: Sri Lanka Project. December 2008, Field Report: Sri Lanka Project. January 2009, NPSL Program Report 2009-2.

Several community-based projects facilitated by NP and supported by a particular donor were to continue under the auspices of local Peace Committees, with NP national staff remaining in the district monitoring their progress to completion. For that purpose, one staff person was based with a local NGO for some time.¹³⁶

Instead, NP started to explore the option to start working in the North-West which eventually led to the opening to the office in Vavuniya in November 2009 (see next section).

2.6 The post-war period

The post-war period of NPSL falls more or less in two parts: A very active time of re-programming and restructuring of work which led to four programmes being pursued, and a time after June 2010 when the Country Director and several other staff had their visa cancelled, NP struggled to avoid being forced to close down in an emergency mode, and started a planned and regular exit by end of 2011.

2.6.1 New strategizing

Already before the end of the war, around the turn of the years 2008-2009, NPSL under one of the interim country directors who was at the same time NP's new Program Director started a process of organizational development which led for the first time to the formulation of a strategic plan for the years 2009-2010. The evaluation from 2010 expresses the opinion that that process

... led to a clearer, more specific understanding of objectives and limited NPSL's role to areas where an international NGO cannot be replaced by local efforts. Today NPSL supports civil society to become self-reliant on security issues and increasingly moves away from emergency response. Instead of defending human rights it moves to defending human rights defenders. Instead of providing security on demand, it increasingly provides the tools that local communities can apply to increase their own security. It contributes to authorities' taking over responsibility on security issues.¹³⁷

The strategic plan read as follows:

NPSL's Vision: A Sri Lanka in which people of all ethnicities, religions and political beliefs are able to continue with their daily lives and engage in legitimate political and human rights activities without fear of harassment, defamation, arbitrary arrest, abduction, disappearance or death.

NPSL's Mission: To reduce violence against civilians and increase the safety and security of vulnerable communities and individuals through the deployment of unarmed civilian peacekeepers to appropriate districts of Sri Lanka.

NPSL's Programmatic Objectives:

- 1. Reduce children's risk of being recruited or harmed by armed groups.*
- 2. Strengthen existing mechanisms for the protection of civilians in the North and East and build the confidence of conflict-affected populations to use and trust those mechanisms.*
- 2.b. Strengthen the mechanisms responsible for the protection of displaced people currently in Vavuniya district and build their confidence to use and trust those mechanisms.*
- 3. Build the capacities of individuals and community-based structures in Sri Lanka to engage in unarmed civilian peacekeeping at the community level.*
- 4. Improve the safety and security of human rights defenders (HRDs) so that they can continue to promote human rights in Sri Lanka.*

¹³⁶ NPSL Program Report 2009-2, Development Strategies Group 2011:7, interview Interview Tim Wallis.

¹³⁷ Berndt 2010:4; see also IGC Minutes Barcelona 2009.

5. Improve the safety and security of local election monitors so that they can help ensure free and fair elections at the local, provincial and national levels.

And to achieve these programmatic objectives:

6. Develop NPSL to have more strength and capacity to achieve the above objectives.

7. Effectively manage the ongoing work and existing commitments of the organization.¹³⁸

At the beginning of November 2009 NPSL finally opened an office in Vavuniya in the North West. It was staffed at the beginning only with Sri Lankans because internationals were refused access – later two, then again only one international joined that team.¹³⁹

In April 2010, NP closed the office in Jaffna. Main reason given was a continuing shortage of funds and the need to concentrate efforts on the situations in Vavuniya and Colombo. Also the offices in Batticaloa and Valaichchenai were to be united to one, however this was only implemented in fall 2010.¹⁴⁰

2.6.2 Four programs

With that strategic plan the shift to programmatic areas, each managed by specific staff, was completed, though there was still something called “core work” – protection activities that for one or the other reason could not be put under one of the programs. The first of these four programs was election monitoring that has been described above in section 3.3.2. The other three were community capacity building, human rights defenders and child protection.¹⁴¹

2.6.2.1 Community Capacity Building

This program was born out of a desire by both UNDP Batticaloa Field Office and Nonviolent Peaceforce-Sri Lanka to build the capacity of members of selected community based organizations (CBOs), government committees, and other village leaders in vulnerable areas in what NP called Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP).¹⁴² The emphasis was laid on proactive presence, strategies for creating safe space in conflict-affected communities in order to enhance human security, and increase community responsibility and social cohesion. There were introductory trainings and trainings of trainers for members of local communities, of CBOs and of Mediation Boards (a governmental institution at District level).¹⁴³ In 2010, NP trained over 200 people in addressing security challenges, with more than two-thirds of the participants being women.¹⁴⁴ A training manual was developed together with UNDP and both used by NP and given to the community members trained as trainers.¹⁴⁵ To conduct the trainings in the national language (Tamil), NP educated two Sri Lankan staff. NP also supported later community leaders when they gave trainings for their communities.¹⁴⁶ In the total period, there may have been about

¹³⁸ Strategic Plan 2009-2010.

¹³⁹ ED Report 2009-11.

¹⁴⁰ ED Report 2010-4.

¹⁴¹ See Development Strategies Group 2011:7-8, BMZ report 2010, <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/fieldwork/all-projects/sri-lanka-project> [12.6.2012].

¹⁴² Later in 2010/11, NP stopped calling these trainings “UCP trainings” because it was felt that there was a danger of confusion with the kind of trainings NP has developed for its own civilian peacekeepers. From then on, the trainings were called “Basic Negotiation Skills and Threat Mitigation training”.

¹⁴³ UNDP report 2010, NPSL Monthly Report Dec 2010.

¹⁴⁴ Nonviolent Peaceforce 2010 Accomplishments. I have not found a comparable figure for 2011, but judging from the number of trainings it probably was somewhat but not much below this figure.

¹⁴⁵ UNDP & Nonviolent Peaceforce 2009.

¹⁴⁶ April 2010 Sri Lanka Report.

15 introductory trainings, 6-7 trainings for trainers and at least 3 trainings which were led by the newly trained trainers in their communities.¹⁴⁷

Case 10: Trainings in Basic Negotiation Skills and Threat Mitigation (earlier: ‘UCP trainings’)

March 2010 began with follow-up visits to the community leaders who participated in the Introductory Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP) training in C., Batticaloa District in February. NP staff were very encouraged to learn of several participants who felt sufficiently empowered following the training that, for the first time, they proactively engaged with local government authorities in following-up human rights cases and set about raising awareness of security issues in their community.

Firstly, two female participants requested NP’s accompaniment to go to the local office of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in Batticaloa to report four cases from their village: the arbitrary arrest and detention of two men, and two cases of disappearance. On instruction from the HRC, the women wrote and submitted a letter about the two men in detention, after which time officials from the Commission went to the prison where the men were being held. The HRC is continuing to advocate on behalf of the men with senior-level government authorities and have reported to the women that they expect them to be released within the next four months.

In the second instance, participants who were eager to put what they had learned from the NP training into practice, put up safety and security signs around their village with messages such as cautioning people not to walk in wooded areas alone at night. Having recently suffered a case of alleged sexual violence by a Sri Lankan Army (SLA) soldier on a young girl in their community, some of the signs carried messages of how such acts are a violation of children’s rights and need to be reported.

And thirdly, two UCP participants were provided with protective accompaniment by NP when they visited the HRC to file a complaint about alleged harassment and threats they and others in their village had been receiving from Sri Lankan Army (SLA) personnel stationed in the area. The HRC confirmed they will follow-up their case by meeting the local Military Commander and pass on their concerns.

NPSL staff, meanwhile, spent much of the month translating the UCP trainers’ manual into Tamil in preparation for the second phase of the UCP program, the Community Training-of-Trainers (ToT), which was held from March 27th-30th in Valaichchenai. Each community selected two out of the initial four participants from the introductory training to attend the ToT, resulting in a total of ten participants (eight female and two male). These participants exhibited great enthusiasm and energy during the four-day training and engaged fully in mapping-out the next steps of the process; designing potential standard operating procedures (SOPs) and contingency plans; and facilitating sessions as practice for when they train others from their community in UCP.

At the end of the four days, participants shared that this training had been particularly beneficial for them as they were able to learn not only from NPSL but also from the stories and experiences of other participants. They also expressed an intention to form a network to support one another in carrying out this work.¹⁴⁸

The training manual that had been produced has, by the way, been later adapted for use in another NP project, the one in South Sudan.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ It is impossible to give an exact figure because the reports do not give that information clearly enough – sometimes the same training seems to be referred to in more than one monthly report. Also, there was no donor financing the whole of the program so that NPSL had no need to summarize this program in total. A report to Belgium for the period that grant funded until mid 2011 speaks of 13 trainings with 250 direct beneficiaries. (Belgium report 2011).

¹⁴⁸ March 2010 Sri Lanka Report.

¹⁴⁹ Interview Tiffany Easthom.

2.6.2.2 Human Rights Defenders

In response to the increasing need for HRDs in the post-conflict context, NPSL replaced the Colombo Response Team with a full-time Human Rights Defenders Unit in Colombo. This team dealt with a number of high-profile HRD cases in 2009-2010.¹⁵⁰ Among these high-profile cases were journalists¹⁵¹ as well as nationally known personalities from civil society. The HRD Project staff organised several security workshops for media organizations in Colombo along with members from the *Human Rights Commission* (HRC) in order to examine the security situation of HRDs and civilians in Sri Lanka as a means to improve their own security and that of their colleagues and employees. NP also established links with regional and international organizations (for example Frontline, Reporters Without Borders, Forum Asia and Swiss Radio) in order to improve NPSL's protection network,¹⁵² and facilitated – as it had done in earlier times – workshops in cooperation with local organizations on human-rights related matters, as well as meetings between HRDs and representatives of the international community.¹⁵³

A report of the HRD work since August 2009 summarizes as follows:

- *NPSL has provided protection to more than 50 human rights defenders in Sri Lanka.*
- *We have identified and begun to support 35 women human right defenders working around the country.*
- *We have helped to build the capacity of more than 100 HRDs and journalists by training them in risk assessment and risk mitigation skills, contingency planning and how to develop their own security plans.*
- *NPSL carried out security assessments at offices of a number of human rights and media institutions, whose staff were being subjected to severe threats at the time.*
- ...
- *NPSL conducted trainings for staff from Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission (HRC) – both Colombo-based staff and regional staff from the HRC's ten regional offices - on how to play a role in improving the safety and security of human rights defenders.*
- *Trainings were given to 50 military officials on conflict resolution, human rights and the protection of human rights defenders.*¹⁵⁴

NP decided to close its HRD department in Colombo and reduce its overall human rights work in July 2010 when the Country Director had her visa cancelled, because it was assumed that it was the HRD work that had caused the sanctions by the government. Some sensitive cases were turned-over to NPs partners, with NP playing a supporting role.¹⁵⁵ A progressive training and skill imparting component was added by NP in order to focus capacity development on local partners, local communities and HRDs, because

*at this point it was more crucial than ever to strengthen local civil society actors, and HRDs, and help victims of human rights violations find the courage to speak up against their perpetrators and to act against future violations.*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Development Strategies Group 2011:7-8. This was probably also the cause that “NPSL's role as an international presence in the protection of HRDs became ‘noticed’ and came under the scrutiny of the Government at a time when the Government was battling HR violations challenges from external actors, governments and advocacy groups.” (Development Strategies Group 2011:8).

¹⁵¹ January 2010 Sri Lanka Report.

¹⁵² Ibid., April 2010 Sri Lanka Report.

¹⁵³ March 2010 Sri Lanka Report. See also the reports from April and May the same year.

¹⁵⁴ Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka 2010c.

¹⁵⁵ NPSL Monthly Report Oct 2010.

¹⁵⁶ Dutch report 2011.

2.6.2.3 Child protection

The recruitment of children more or less ended with the war. Large numbers of under-age soldiers gave themselves up and came into custody of the Sri Lankan government. The work that had already started in 2008 (see 2.5.3.1 above) was continued and expanded in October 2009 to Vavuniya in the North.¹⁵⁷ NP worked there in close cooperation with various authorities (NCPA, Probation Service and other governmental and non-governmental structures) in the process of aiding former child soldiers who had surrendered, and to support IDP families and vulnerable communities to keep their children in a safe environment.

When in March 2011 NP managed to get a MoU signed with the *Ministry of Children's Development and Women's Affairs*, NPSL got access to formerly LTTE controlled areas.¹⁵⁸ Even before then, NP Vavuniya provided accompaniment to NCPA in visiting welfare homes and guest houses where children affected by the war were taken care of. Through this, NP gained information on the well-being of children sheltered in welfare homes and the like. Joint activities with various local organizations like trainings and awareness programs were initiated.¹⁵⁹ The overall expected outcome of the project was, according to the final evaluation in 2011, a “*reduction in the level of violence and human rights violations and an improved public perception of security at implementation sites ...*”.¹⁶⁰

In 2011, in order to keep faith with the MoU with the *Ministry of Child Development of Women's Affairs*, NP also engaged for a first time since its aborted project in Matara in clear peace-building activities. These activities were outside of NP's mandate but still considered necessary in order to gain the necessary acceptance for continuing the work respectively closing down in an orderly manner. It was a project of finding funds for the building of two children centres, one in the Batticaloa and one in the Vavuniya area.¹⁶¹ Fundraising for this purpose however did not yield the expected results and in the end NP had to hand the project over in an unfinished manner to local organizations.

2.6.2.4 NP getting in trouble with the government

It was probably the human rights work that caused NP to become an organization non grata for the Sri Lankan government. The first signal was that the work visa of the rather newly hired international Communication Manager was not renewed in spring 2010. In June, just when the NPSL Country Director was ‘rented out’ to serve as Acting Country Director for NP's new project in South Sudan, and the former Head of Field Office in Vavuniya, a Sri Lankan national, was appointed as the Acting CD for NPSL for what was initially to be a period of 6 months, the blow fell. As staff was still coming to terms with these new developments in NPSL management, the Sri Lankan Immigration and Emigration Department terminated the visas of the Country Director and of the HRD Project Coordinator and ordered them to leave the country by 1st of July. The CD was allowed to return for two weeks to hand her work over to the Interim Country Director. At that point in time, there were still 13 internationals in the project, about half of them in office positions.

NPSL decided to suspend most day-to-day activities for a couple of weeks in order to carry out an internal assessment of the situation. They proposed to NP's governing board (IGC) to close NPSL asap. However, this recommendation though adopted by the IGC was not implemented. Instead senior Colombo-based staff and NP's Interim Program Director who came to Sri Lanka embarked on a series of high-level meetings with governmental contacts to determine the

¹⁵⁷ Aseervatham 2009:3, NPSL 2010b.

¹⁵⁸ Belgium report 2011.

¹⁵⁹ Sri Lanka Program Report May 2011.

¹⁶⁰ Development Strategies Group 2011:5.

¹⁶¹ Children Centers 2011.

political space available for NPSL to continue its work. For a long and nerve-wrecking time, it was not clear if any expat staff would have their visa renewed, and national staff was much concerned about police investigations on NP's past work that started around the same time.

Such security threats, a shortage of finances (partly due to a grant lost after the reduction of the HRD program), the lack of an international figure head of NPSL¹⁶² and a major flood in the East around Christmas time added to the difficulties of NP in the second half of 2010. A series of negative articles mentioning NPSL were published in national media. These gave NPSL's a bad image, associating staff with what were called 'anti-state activities', and put also NP's partners and beneficiaries potentially at risk (see below section 3.2).

After long discussions and a few mildly positive signals (like the renewal of some work visa) NP decided not to leave immediately but to settle for a year-long process of winding affairs down. That was communicated to the relevant Sri Lankan authorities who then granted a work visa to a new international Country Director. Most international staff had left by the end of 2010 – some voluntarily, two more also had their visa cancelled. Only four expats - three FTMs and the Country Director - remained with NPSL until the end.

2.6.3 Winding down

The exit strategy that NP developed was mostly based on the hope to create some last-minute sustainability of as many elements of NP's work as possible.

The following changes were made to its programmes:

In the HRD Programme

Connect HRDs with other actors that can help provide protection (lawyers, diplomatic community, etc.), Continue to accompany lower-profile HRDs while they engage in activities to diffuse communal violence or disputes, continue to accompany lower-profile HRDs to meet with trusted government officials in the districts, limit size of trainings if necessary in order to avoid public attention to events, support local partners to organize forums, rather than NPSL facilitating them directly. This could include financial and technical support, as well as linking the local partner with possible HRD participants.

In its core protection work NPSL has decided to:

Suspend direct protection and relocations and to continue linking civilians to other actors that can address their protection needs. In high-risk cases, provide consultation and refer clients to other organizations that could assist with protection and/or relocation, suspend accompaniments to police and armed forces, and suspend accompaniments to report human rights abuses.¹⁶³

In addition, in the Child Protection Programme NPSL suspended participation in UNSCR 1612-related activities. In Community Unarmed Civilian Capacity Building Project, NPSL decided to continue its activities as planned, but with a special focus on child protection so that the project was encompassed by the agreement with the Vavuniya GA and also to build trust with Child Protection Authorities.¹⁶⁴

The two District Offices in Vavuniya and Batticaloa were formally closed and operations ended on 21st October 2011; the last two months NP spent tidying up and finalising administrative questions, commissioning a final evaluation which was then presented in a workshop at the beginning of December, and offering some training to national staff.

¹⁶² NP in that time sent several international consultants over to help out and support the national (Tamil) CD.

¹⁶³ See also Sri Lanka Program Report October 2011.

¹⁶⁴ Development Strategies Group 2011:11-12. See also Alston & Schweitzer 2011.

2.7 After the exit

As an important part of the exit strategy NPSL negotiated with a local NGO, a network of lawyers, to play the role of an ‘Oversight Agency’ in 2012. The purpose of this measure is to have an organization within Sri Lanka to be the first place of contact of former staff in case any security threats materialized after NP had closed down. The NGO would then provide legal advice and if necessary have access to a contingency fund for protective accommodation and flights out of the country.¹⁶⁵

So far, about eight months after NP’S departure from Sri Lanka, both fears and hopes seem not to have fully materialized. The fears had centred around threats to former staff – police investigations, harassments or extrajudicial incidents. But so far, most staff seem to be able to continue their lives and career in safety.

The hopes had been that local organizations and former staff may be able to continue with some of the work that NP started, for example continue to give trainings. This also does not seem to have materialized. Visitors of NP going to Sri Lanka in the first half of 2012 all reported a feeling of gap and disappointment, sometimes combined with non-understanding of why NP left, dominated.

There remains a sad consensus among all that I met that NP is sorely missed and has left behind a huge and critical gap that has not been filled - and shows every indication of increasing rather than decreasing. I heard some ongoing frustration from various “friends of NP” about our leaving and wishing we’d been able to remain. I also heard of several cases while I was there of vulnerable individuals (one who was a close supporter of NP)“, reported one such visitor.¹⁶⁶

2.8 Summary and appraisal of the activities

During the nine years of NP’S presence in Sri Lanka, NP dealt primarily with the following issues:

- Child soldiers: Prevention of recruitment, working for the release of child soldiers, protection of them and their families and reintegration after having left the armed group.
- Conflicts between ethnic and religious groups at the community (grassroots) level.
- Human rights issues and protection of human rights defenders, other civil society activists and (national) workers of humanitarian NGOs.
- IDP protection issues.
- Violence during elections times.
- Other types of violence individuals or groups in communities faced.

If one wants to summarize the various activities and tools undertaken by NP throughout the years without going into too many of the details of the particular times and situations – which also varied from field site to field site – one comes to the following list:¹⁶⁷

- Proactive presence in communities, regular visits to various communities.
- Proactive presence at events like festivals, nonviolent actions etc.
- Monitoring of situations and places, for example IDP camps.
- Fast response to incidents or signs of early warning, by contacting actors, passing messages, bringing them together (facilitate dialogue).

¹⁶⁵ Alston 2011.

¹⁶⁶ Passion 2012. Similar Interview Steve Alston.

¹⁶⁷ There have been various list of this type throughout NPSL’S existence, see for example Furnari 2006:6-7. This one here attempts to create generic categories, while the other lists – as far as I am aware of them –always mixed types of activities with concrete purposes.

- Protective accompaniment of activists and citizens while travelling and during critical visits.
- Fact finding (e.g. for rumour control).
- Offer safe space for meetings of local groups (CBOs).
- Referral of people to other agencies, authorities and (sometimes) Embassies.
- Follow-up on cases by contacting authorities, agencies etc, work with authorities and agencies on re-integration of child soldiers, help people to get legal documentation (passports).
- Raise and address issues with other actors (e.g. how to deal with former child soldiers).
- ‘Strategic support’, discussion of approaches with activists, help groups to set up systems of early warning.
- Relationship-building with multiple actors, primarily at grassroots and middle level of society.
- Networking at various levels - between CBOs, NGOs, individual civil society leaders, authorities, large governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- Facilitating, nurturing and strengthening individuals’ and communities’ (community support networks) capacity and confidence to access services and democratic mechanisms and institutions (police processes, Human Rights Commissions, other protective services, etc.), and encouragement for those institutions to be responsive and accountable.
- Facilitate funding for beneficiaries.
- Being based in vulnerable communities (often as the only INGO), through knowledge gathered in the course of other activities, and /or extra visits / patrols, serving as eyes and ears for other agencies (SLMM, UNICEF and UNHCR, INGOs)).
- Trainings (capacity-building in: documentation and advocacy skills; community protection skills).

When comparing to later NP projects, one issue does not show up: gender-based violence. That does not mean that NP was not aware of the importance of gender as a cross-cutting topic in its programmatic work. There was a conscious effort to include women as beneficiaries – in fact, they often constituted the majority of the people NP worked with, and in many activities – e.g. the trainings – NP tried to make sure that both women and men participated. The evaluation of 2007 found:

*However, NPSL lacks an analysis of gender as a factor in conflict dynamics in Sri Lanka and a conscious and consistent policy of addressing issues deriving from this. Sri Lankan analysis of the effects of armed conflict on women is not taken as a reference for decisions concerning NPSL’s intervention. Therefore, though no problems in this regard came to our attention, little can be said about the gender sensitivity in relation to causes, consequences and impact of the conflict and the civil war in Sri Lanka ...*¹⁶⁸

This has changed later as far as can be ascertained from the reports. Here is one example of a report that reflects how women were particularly affected by the war:

NPSL worked with a significant number of both men and women HRDs (around 30 men and 15 women). Gender balance was particularly important for this work, as women HRDs tend to have a better understanding of the needs of women and children under threat. Many households all over the country, but specifically in the North, are now headed by women who have lost their husbands and/or sons in the war. They are left with little income and/or protection from within. Women are the ones often speaking up for violations regarding missing persons, disappearances, extra judicial killings and other violations. By supporting Sri Lankan Human Rights Defenders to promote the rights of vulnerable groups, this project had a positive impact on the rights of especially women and children.

¹⁶⁸ Hebib & Berndt 2007:32.

There are high number of women-headed households in the North and East because many of their husbands either died or went missing as a consequence of the war. These women and their families are especially vulnerable. Providing presence, improving the community's ability to protect themselves, and diffusing threats NPSL has specifically and substantially increased the safety and security of women in the North and East.¹⁶⁹

As to special attention to how men were affected, nothing could be found in the reports.

NP's partners were often at the same time NP's beneficiaries. When to categorize these beneficiaries, the following list of main beneficiaries could be generated:

- Children and youth (Tamil, Muslims) affected by the practice of child recruitment.
- The families of these youth.
- Civil society activists, including HRDs, clergy and NGO / CBO leaders.
- Communities in the East and North and their leaders.
- IDPs.

The question of what NP achieved during these years will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁶⁹ Cordaid report 2011.

3. What has been achieved?

In this section I am going to look at the outcomes and impact of the work of NPSL. Since definitions of output, outcome and impact vary, and in particular outcomes easily tend to be equalled with either output or impact, it may be helpful to start with a definition of these three terms. Here is a simple one based on the one used by OECD:

Outputs: *products and services which are produced or provided by a project. Outputs are produced to achieve an outcome.*

Outcome: *short and medium-term change for the target groups that is directly related to the project outputs. The outcome is the result of the use of outputs, which has a benefit for the target group.*

Impact: *long-term intended and unintended positive and negative changes for various project stakeholders (target groups, partner organizations, local organizations, etc.) and in the project environment. These impacts can occur as a result of interventions during project implementation and / or after a project has ended.*¹⁷⁰

To give an example how this may translate to NP's work: The output of a training in community protection techniques is that x number of people completed that training successfully. The outcome then is that a number of the participants begin to use the techniques learned in a community conflict that arises. If because of these new approaches to intra-community conflict violence in the community goes down and conflicts are dealt with peacefully in the future, the training achieved impact. Similarly, in the field of protection of human rights defenders or other civil society activists, the impact would be that because of the continued activity of these activists human rights violations are reduced, communities live more peacefully etc.

3.1 Findings of the various evaluations and other sources

NPSL underwent a learning curve in regard to monitor and report on outcomes and impact. The first evaluation of 2004 did not even consider effects the work had because it was deemed too early to do so. The first time NP looked at outcomes or impact was during the review visit of 2005, but the findings were rather vague at that moment. Interviews with those people with whom NP worked indicated that there was a subjective feeling of citizens that they felt safer when NP was around. In addition, local groups and individual activists highlighted 'support' that NP had given them.

Later reports, internal reviews and external evaluations include a number of more concrete indicators and observations regarding the effects of NP's work, though each used their own instruments to gather information. A uniform system of M&E was not in place. Since this evaluation here as a meta-evaluation is not based on any new field research, I will first quote excerpts of various reports at some length, before then summarizing and assessing the question of outcomes and impact of NP's work.

3.1.1 Furnari 2006

The first systematic description of outcomes was made by volunteer Learning and Evaluation Officer Ellen Furnari in 2006. She looked at internal reports and interviewed colleagues and partners in the field, and drew up indicators for effects NP's work had.

Goal 1 Reduce the level of and potential for violence.

NP has worked with numerous families to help protect family members from abduction and/ or forced recruitment, or to support them in advocating for the release of their family members. ... There are numerous

¹⁷⁰ Welthungerhilfe 2008.

examples of NP's work contributing to a decrease in violence or potential for violence in specific communities. These situations have included demonstrations or hartals, complex violent situations in communities, and violent conflicts between specific sub-groups in a community. Some of these incidents may have had larger repercussions – i.e., if the violence in a particular situation (Trincomalee around the Buddha statue) had not decreased, it might have led to larger escalation. NPSL is clearly only one of many elements in each of these situations, but is also clearly a significant and often unique element. The effect of successful efforts – i.e., efforts that contribute to decreased violence and potential for violence, often lead to new or stronger relationships with others and increased trust in NP and visibility of the work. ...

Goal 2 To support and improve the safety, confidence and ability of Sri Lankan peacemakers and other civilians to address conflict in nonviolent ways.

NPSL is currently supporting some activists in specific communities and perhaps nurturing the emergence of new civilian involvement in some of these places, though it is too soon to tell. NP's presence, accompaniment, and strategic support helps to make space for civilians to engage in peace and justice activities in many instances, with already existing groups and new groups NP has helped to nurture. There is evidence in a few communities that some families, after initial help from NP, often pursue abduction cases, for example with the LTTE, on their own. NP work has assisted other individuals and organizations to do their work in relation to development, peace and human rights, prevention of child recruitment, etc. NP is either closer to the grassroots and/or more flexible in its mandate, than many larger international agencies, thus able to compliment their work at the community or grassroots level. NP's international status allows FTMs access and ability to protect and intervene that local groups often do not have. There are already a few cases where work with individuals is leading to groups and potential for larger actions. ... Requests for NPSL to provide training or collaborate with training and to help with the rapid deployment peace brigade with Sarvodaya's Shanthi Sena are early signs of leaving more capacity behind after the project is over. ...

A particular subset of this work has addressed issues of human rights and child rights. ... This work not only helps to prevent violence in various ways, but supports civilians in taking what is often their first step to work for human rights and resistance to militarization. In a number of cases with which NP has worked, children have been moved to safer places or released from the LTTE and "disappeared" people have been accounted for. And in many cases they have not.

Goal 3 Deter resumption of violent conflict.

... NP's work has contributed to the decrease in violence in specific situations. As violence is often a positively reinforcing phenomenon- that is violence easily escalates to further and more destructive violence, decreasing violence in and of itself may be a form of prevention. In addition, NP presence, accompaniment, bridge building, supporting the development of new nonviolent resources and other work previously mentioned have clearly contributed to the prevention of violence at specific times or in specific communities. The NPSL project is NOT designed to directly affect the official, Track One peace process. The goal is to support civilian engagement in their own communities, with NGO/INGOs and with GoSL and LTTE to work for peace with justice in peacemaking work.¹⁷¹

3.1.2 Hebib and Berndt 2007

Furnari's summary is very similar to the findings of the external evaluation of 2007. The evaluators also report about the feeling of being safer from the side of activists which allows them to "feed information, for example on human rights violations, into national and international networks", the support for families of child soldiers, facilitation of inter-community meetings on a local basis and found impact on local tensions.¹⁷²

Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka (NPSL) engages in many different kinds of activities such as different forms of accompaniment, networking and connecting, concerned engagement as internationals, presence at

¹⁷¹ Furnari 2006: 7-11.

¹⁷² Hebib & Berndt 2007:25-27.

events and places at risk of violence and crisis, and rumor control, etc. These activities are primarily at the request of or in some way in support of local Sri Lankan civilians. While NPSL sometimes provides feedback, inspiration and a sounding board, our work is guided by the local agenda, not ours. These activities, over time and repetition serve to:

- *increase the actual safety of individuals,*
- *decrease violence in individual and family lives and in specific communities,*
- *increase nonviolent options to address problems and needs,*
- *support the building of new connections and*
- *networks and help raise the visibility of critical issues and the ability to discuss them.*

The result is reduced barriers to civilian involvement in peace with justice work. We assume that as this work continues and there are enough positive outcomes and not too many negative ones this will tend to make room for new civilian participation in both ongoing and new peace with justice activities. This in turn should lead to some structural changes, thus further increasing safety and decreasing violence and leading to more peaceful and just conditions in Sri Lanka. It is an iterative process that requires significant follow up and support after the initial set of activities. It is a process that is slow to develop and takes time to mature and show impact.”¹⁷³

They mention three points that Furnari did not capture:

- *That NP may have provided “a symbol for the possibility of other ways than recurring to violence and repression”.*¹⁷⁴
- *In the North, FTMs quoted a feedback by Sri Lankan authorities that NPSL presence with communities was considered helpful as it helped to instil sufficient trust to prevent them from displacing themselves.*¹⁷⁵
- *In early 2007 NPSL was instrumental in pushing the debate among Colombo based NGOs about state accountability for abductions.*¹⁷⁶

3.1.3 Internal assessment 2008

In 2008, NPSL drafted a two-page paper called “Key indications of impacts 2003-2008”.¹⁷⁷ This paper summarizes a number of points that have already been mentioned. It emphasises in particular how support of civil society organizations and informal groups helped to break the culture of silence, advocate for their needs and address wrongs publicly. A second area the paper distinguishes is what it calls “NP’s strategic use of protective presence increases community safety at times of instability, communal tension, or crisis?”. Under this heading there are listed the following two points:

- *Positive outcomes from authorities following interventions are reported: for example, confiscated fishing boats have been returned; fishing restrictions have been eased; detained NGO workers have been released; or improper IDP resettlement processes have been halted. Positive change of behavior observed or in demands/ response of armed groups after coordinated advocacy and relationship-building efforts.*
- *Some authorities have encouraged NP presence in crisis situations, including in IDP camps during resettlement processes or if outside armed agents enter into camps; during Security Force cordon-and-search operations following a violent incident when community fear of retaliation is heightened; or before or after religious or communal violence in an area. Some authorities tell us ‘unofficially’ that our presence changed behavior of their colleagues and their accountability was heightened. Some community*

¹⁷³ Hebib & Berndt 2007:64pp.

¹⁷⁴ Hebib & Berndt 2007:26.

¹⁷⁵ Hebib & Berndt 2007:27.

¹⁷⁶ Hebib & Berndt 2007:29.

¹⁷⁷ I have to thank Rita Webb for making me aware of this paper.

*members state that in the past authorities reacted differently to them or in periods of tension compared to now with NP presence.*¹⁷⁸

The third area in this short, obviously for public consumption written paper is “NP plays vital awareness and advocacy role in helping grassroots experiences to be conveyed to key stakeholders at multiple levels”, and claims:

- *Sri Lankan civil society in the capital is taking a more pro-active response and advocacy role, including at international levels, based on visits to North and East facilitated or supported by NP teams.*
- *High level fact-finding missions, UN Special Rapporteurs, international human rights groups, national civil society actors, etc., seek briefings and coordination with district teams regarding the ground situation; directly-affected families are able to tell their stories and self-advocacy is supported.*¹⁷⁹

3.1.4 Evaluation for UNICEF 2009

The internal evaluation conducted for UNICEF in 2009 (Aseervatham 2009) deals primarily with the work related to child protection. It is the first evaluation based partly on quantitative indicators with the figures provided by the teams, and thereby gives more substance to earlier reports that talk basically about the same activities and effects, but without being able to substantiate their claims.¹⁸⁰ The evaluation for UNICEF lists several objectives (presumably those determined in the contract with UNICEF).

Outputs for the first objective, to “enhance the capacity of local organizations and individuals to advocate for the rights of children, women, families and rural communities affected by armed conflict at the local, district and national levels”, are the following according to this evaluation:

1. Advocacy activities that target groups (religious leaders, partner organizations, authorities, HRDs, community leaders/members, embassy members and university students) participated in. The indicator was meant to be “Increase in number of advocacy actions initiated by communities/ target groups as a result of support given by NPSL” but the figures do however not show any visible increase, nor is there a baseline against which to measure the figures given.¹⁸¹ The activities described by the way are not those on child protection alone, but incidents of dealing with community tensions (see 2.5 above), the facilitation of an early warning system (see 2.1.5.4) and trainings with human rights defenders.
2. Child protection cases being handled by the community instead coming to NP. There was a total of 97 child protection cases over the year (July 2008-June 2009), but again there is no clear trend visible in the figures. The comments however state:

*What it is important to mention is that the actual numbers of cases regarding under age coming to the NP office decreased notably from January 2009 until the end of the project. However, the number of families coming to the office to report other kinds of security incidents kept increasing. These reports still included threats of re-recruitment of children and severe problems in reintegration of the returned children.*¹⁸²

Given that this was the period of the final stage of the war, and NP’s absence from Jaffna and Trincomalee in the last months of that period, no claim really can be made that the changes can be attributed to NP.

¹⁷⁸ Key indications of impacts 2008.

¹⁸⁰ For example Completion Report to Oxfam Australia 2007.

¹⁸⁰ For example Completion Report to Oxfam Australia 2007.

¹⁸¹ Just to give an impression: the number for partner organizations for the full year are 187, for human rights defender 34 and for authorities 129. (Aseervatham 2009:21).

¹⁸² Aseervatham 2009:24.

3. People come together across ethnic divides to discuss problems related to child rights and protection, with the increase in number of joint meetings between ethnic groups in safe space provided by NPSL as indicator. Such meetings happened almost exclusively in the Batticaloa district (62 of 64), and there was an obvious increase in numbers over the last three months of the reporting period.
4. As to the output that “*people have greater confidence in the effectiveness of state structures to handle cases of child protection*”, the internal evaluation found:

While some community members shared that they had more confidence to approach state mechanisms [for example 27.58 % of member organization members, 44,44 % of HRDs and 38,39 % of community leaders / members] they did not feel that the effectiveness of state mechanisms and structures had increased. Many interviewees stated that while NPSL support made them feel safer, the surrounding structures did not support the process enough to make them feel more confident. Many mentioned neither an increase nor a decrease in confidence.¹⁸³

As to the second objective, to “*provide support for formal and informal networks to be established and to function effectively at the community level to prevent, limit and resolve the effects of violence on children and women, and on their families and communities*”, the evaluation reports on a number of networks in the different field sites of NP.

1. There was a number of community meetings initiated by target groups (92 in total), with their numbers growing in the last months of the reporting period which is an indicator for change. The evaluation claims that “*regular stakeholder-communication with NPSL partner organizations has increased their participation in community meetings*” and that “*local organizations working with Human Right Defenders were supported by NPSL to take part in INGO meetings*”.
2. As to the intended output that “*intermediate target groups are better able to carry out their own work through field visits without NP accompaniment*”, no changes were found and the number of field visits rather went down due to the insecure context in early 2009.
3. Greater collaboration between agencies (ICRC, Save the children, HRC, UNICEF, NCCSL¹⁸⁴ and Amnesty International) across districts the evaluation could not prove but it shows definitely a high number of cases (59) of such collaboration with NP. Especially ICRC referred – before it left the East in 2009 – many cases to NP.

The third objective was “*Facilitate coordinated action and intervention on issues of human security that directly and indirectly impact children and women affected by armed conflict*”.

1. As to the number of children who have gone through reintegration services, the report shows a total of 61 (mostly female) children / youth NP accompanied and who went through reintegration, but only about 8,2% of them the evaluators considered as successfully reintegrated - 5 children in Trincomalee district.
2. 135 people reported to the appropriate government authorities and obtained access to legal documents with NPSL support.
3. As another outcome and at the same time indicator the evaluation asked for the number of people who expressed a decrease in their sense of vulnerability. It gives however no figures, and rather than of speaking of a “decrease” it carefully phrases: “*In all 4 districts interviewees reported that their sense of vulnerability did not increase.*”¹⁸⁵

3.1.5 Berndt 2010

¹⁸³ Aseervatham 2009:26-27.

¹⁸⁴ I do not know for which agency this acronym stands.

¹⁸⁵ Aseervatham 2009: 34.

Hagen Berndt who had been one of the two evaluators of the 2007 evaluation, evaluated NP's work again in 2010 on behalf of one of the donors (zivik/Germany). He was able to compare NP's status in early 2010 (his visit happened before NP's visa troubles started) with the earlier situation, and remarked:

There was a gap between NPSL's presentation as an organization intervening in the violent conflict in Sri Lanka by nonviolent means, referring to the macro-conflict, and its practice as mainly having an impact on local micro-conflicts in a peace keeping role. Since the end of 2008, NPSL underwent a process of organizational development that led to a clearer, more specific understanding of objectives and limited NPSL's role to areas where an international NGO cannot be replaced by local efforts. Today NPSL supports civil society to become self reliant on security issues and increasingly moves away from emergency response. Instead of defending human rights it moves to defending human rights defenders. Instead of providing security on demand, it increasingly provides the tools that local communities can apply to increase their own security. It contributes to authorities' taking over responsibility on security issues.¹⁸⁶

Today NPSL supports civil society and increasingly moves away from emergency response. Instead of defending human rights it moves to defending human rights defenders. Instead of providing security on demand, it increasingly provides the tools that local communities can apply to increase their own security.

First effects of these strategic changes become visible:

- *The Jaffna and Vavuniya offices (due to administrative obstacles for expatriate team members) work without international staff and develop an awareness that they are capable of running the office.*
- *An accompaniment of a threatened person to Jaffna was guaranteed by a Sinhala lawyer from Colombo trained and guided by NPSL.*
- *Srilankan field staff becomes FTM in another NP project like in the Philippines.*
- *In Valaichchenai, a local security network of grassroot organizations and NGOs is established and NPSL soon will hand over the facilitation of the group.¹⁸⁷*

3.1.6 Reports 2010-2011

Donor reports from 2011 report about outcomes and impact of NP's work in the field of HRD protection:

In the present project, the beneficiaries, i.e. HRDs and local communities, were able to improve real and perceived safety through training and capacity building exercises. These included meetings dealing with sharing of experiences, security strategies and networks, contacts with influential persons, safe accommodation and accompaniment, and embassy interviews and contacts. The presence of NPSL along with its national and international staff improved the sense of protection and security, as NPSL provided direct protection through its local partners and / or directly. Although it must be recognised that this was heavily compromised by NPSL's promotion in the media as an international 'subversion' agency. NPSL was able to mobilize wider segment of key players in both district and national level, such as police, line ministries, religious groups, local militia, and local organizations and agencies to improve safety and security of HRDs who were at risk. ...

NPSL in the present project was able to provide safety and protection to its beneficiary HRDs in their field locations. As a result, these HRDs were able to continue with their political advocacy and human rights activism with limited resistance from perpetrators of human rights violations and security forces and state intelligence. Therefore it can be stated that these HRDs, with the safety and protection provided by NPSL and other organizations, were able to support functional democracy in north and east of Sri Lanka. ...

The meetings and inter-actions between threatened HRDs and police officers, security forces, local political leaders and local militia enabled better communication and helped dispel doubts and suspicions between

¹⁸⁶ Berndt 2010:4.

¹⁸⁷ Berndt 2010:16-17.

*conflicting parties. NPSL has not been able to achieve this to anything like the extent originally envisaged and the broad context cannot be said to have significantly improved for HRD's in this final reporting period. However this proactive approach by NPSL has helped to improve real and perceived safety and security of some HRDs who were at risk.*¹⁸⁸

Also the so-called “UCP trainings” (the trainings on community protection techniques) clearly yielded positive outcomes. NP collected a number of reports from those who had attended such trainings on how they were able to (better) deal with tensions and security-related issues in their communities afterwards.¹⁸⁹ And a monthly report from that period tells the following story:

This month [May 2010] former UCP-training participants from Marapalam put their UCP skills into action in response to an abduction that took place in their community. On the afternoon of 11 May 2010, two men dressed in plain-clothes and travelling in an unmarked van came to the village of Marapalam claiming to be staff from an international NGO that works with resettled communities in Batticaloa District. The two men began enquiring from members of the village about families who had recently arrived from the Vanni area in the north of Sri Lanka. They then went to talk with one of the families that were newly resettled. Among other questions, the two men asked their intended victim if he knew a specific person, who is currently being held in a detention centre in the north. When he answered ‘yes,’ the two men took him outside the house to point out where the rest of his family was living in the village but before he could do so, they forced him into the van and drove away.

*Some of the village's UCP team-members, who live near this family's house, had witnessed these events and were suspicious about the two men and their unmarked vehicle. Therefore, when they saw what was happening they took down the vehicle's licence-plate number, and then brought everyone in the village together to gather all the pertinent details. Remembering what they had learned at NP's UCP training they went immediately to report the incident to the relevant local authorities, including the village-level government agent (GS) and the Police. They also contacted local NP staff to alert them of what had happened and plans were made for the victim's family to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission (HRC). In the event, the arranged meeting with the HRC did not need to take place; once the Police had taken down the details of the case, the Senior Superintendent of Police recognised the number-plate of the unmarked vehicle. The man who had been abducted was released shortly thereafter.*¹⁹⁰

3.1.7 Exit evaluation 2011

The final evaluation of NPSL in 2011 conducted by the *Development Strategies Group* confirms the following five “key achievements” that NP listed in another of its donor reports from 2011.

The following points have been listed as NPSL's successes as per their report to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These were validated through the validation workshop, consultations and the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research.

- *By supporting families to approach human rights and security institutions, NPSL increased individuals' and communities' access to local services and their ability to seek redress for human rights violations. In this sense, the international presence and accompaniment has been crucial to the success of the program*
- *NPSL successfully increased the number of instances where targeted authorities appropriately and effectively addressed individuals' security and human rights concerns. In the long term, these efforts combat impunity, thereby reducing the future level of human rights violations.*
- *Helping civilians to obtain proper documentation increased civilians' freedom of movement and reduced the chances of being detained by authorities – absence of which would lead to detainment by authorities.*

¹⁸⁸ Dutch report 2011.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ NPSL Monthly Program Report May 2010.

- NPSL's work allowed HRDs to carry out their work more safely and effectively. In effect, the human rights situation was monitored more accurately, more human rights violation complaints were made more frequently and successfully.
- NPSL improved the real and perceived safety of IDPs and of children at risk of recruitment or re-recruitment. For example, when carrying out an evaluation during the reporting period on its child protection work, one ex-child soldier said, "If NPSL wasn't there on that day I would now be dead. They saved my life and protected me by taking me to a safer location."¹⁹¹

They also list eleven points in assessment of NP and its work in Sri Lanka in the final two years. Some of them concern the outcomes and impact of NP's work, while others rather deal with the dilemmas and challenges.

1. *NPSL's presence, as an international organization is validated and appreciated: NPSL, as an international organization created an enabling environment for local organizations and civil society actors to carry on their work on advocacy and activism. Most organizations and actors at the local and national level felt comfortable or safer because NP not only provided them with possible avenues of protection, in the case of extreme intimidation or danger, but also provided them with the protection by simply being an 'international and visible witness' in Sri Lanka.*
2. *HRD protection work is viewed as NPSL's greatest contribution in the 2009-2011 period: During this period NP provided unarmed civilian accompaniment by international and local staff (depending on the nature of the case), transportation for HRDs and their families to safe houses, funding for hotels or movement within the country, and assistance in leaving the country for those whose lives are threatened. This was largely done through introductions and fast-tracked visas and having access to NP's own funds or partner funds. In addition, one of the key positives sited in NP's HRD protection work, is its flexibility and responsiveness in supporting requests by various actors. NP's field presence and networks, which enabled its high level of accessibility to local and national actors, was also highlighted. ...*
3. *Child protection and technical training is highly appreciated: At a community level NP's child protection and work in preventing re-recruitment, supporting parents in accessing information about disappeared or detained children through good contacts and relationships with local military, government officials and other groups, was highly valued. At a national level, its child protection work validates NP's presence in Sri Lanka through local community action and government partnerships. The MOU with the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs helped 'buy time' for NP to carry on its field operations and implement its exit strategy, while adding another dimension to its scope of work in Sri Lanka, which helped re-established government links at a national level. ...*
4. *NP's legacy at community level lies in the civilian peacekeeping and community/ stakeholder training on managing conflict: ... 83% of the respondents surveyed validate the perception from the field that NP's skill development training has created an impact on the ground with about 46% on average think that it has prevented violence from erupting in the community. The transfer of skills to local actors, community leaders and organizations in peacekeeping is a success indicator of NP's exit strategy.*
5. *NPSL's approach of long-term set-up, preparation and integration into a location as a community actor rather than outsider supports greater effectiveness:*
6. *NPSL has built-up valuable and lasting networks, partnerships and peer-communities at an individual (staff) and organizational level.*
7. *Striking a balance - close links with Government vs. close links with non-state actors: In general, NP has built up relationships with individuals within government at a local level and within institutions such as MCDWA at a national level, which have proved to be effective partnerships. [They then continue to describe some problems, and conclude:] However, this also highlights the tension*

¹⁹¹ Development Strategies Group 2011:6, quoting Belgium donor report.

- between the nature of NP's work and the importance of maintaining equi-distant relationships but with the flexibility and strategic foresight to manoeuvre internal politics. It is equally important to manage the perceptions of stakeholders so as not be viewed as 'too close' to government, which in turn limits trust and effectiveness of work with non-state actors. It also means working closely with donors and known political actors on information and strategic alliances. ... NP managed to use the difference between practice and policy to their advantage with regard to relationship management with the government sector. For example, even though NCPA or other ministries at a national policy level may have not been willing to work with NP, at a local level NP worked with individuals within the government sector (GAs, CPROs, NCPA officers) unofficially and officially to expedite its work.*
8. *Striking a balance – 'visibility' vs. service provision: NP seems to have struggled in 2009-2010 period in managing the tension between being effective on the ground, (through its highly appreciated ad-hoc case by case methodology, its flexibility of approach and its ability to respond quickly to requests) vs. maintaining or staying within its mandate (by prioritizing standards and processes, rules of engagement, security and centralised control from Colombo).*
 9. *It is important to manage expectation of community actors, stakeholders and partners: Community actors, government counterparts and HRDs may have expected more than NP's mandated provided for, in certain incidences. Their role as 'witness' although entirely to facilitate and enable the space for local actors to function, was seen by some as giving the potential for international advocacy or 'telling the story' to the outside world. In some cases, like with MCDWA, the expectation and assumption that NP was a child protection organization, only, was perhaps a well-managed relationship. Community members and partners in the field were not aware that NP was exiting, or, in some cases, truly aware of the scope of NP's work in Sri Lanka. This indicates that NP was not always successful, or did not understand and prioritise the need, in managing expectations of stakeholders. This could have been achieved through information sharing and by adopting a clear external communications strategy or 'messaging strategy'. A consistent messaging strategy and strategic engagement with key actors in the media might have supported the management of negative perceptions overall.*
 10. *NP's high response rate and volume of work may have affected its ability to maintain systematic follow-up.*
 11. *During the 2009-2010 period, the rise in the number of donors indicates the unique nature of its work and the necessity of its role within the sector.¹⁹²*

3.1.8 Summary and appraisal

The frequency and foci of the different evaluations leave something to be desired in regard to capturing the impact of NP's work. They for the most part stop at the level of outcomes, but do not deal in a satisfactory manner with the question what kind of longer-term change – if any – has been achieved through NP's work.

Much of NP's work must be classified as a humanitarian effort, protecting the human rights, contributing to securing the physical and mental well-being and in many cases certainly saving the lives of individuals. Repeatedly it is reported that people felt safer because NP was around, activists continued with their activism, people dared to advocate for their needs and developed capacity to do so. Often NP served as a bridge linking people to authorities or humanitarian agencies, at time providing protective accompaniment if people did not feel safe to go to them on their own, as well as accompanying staff of such agencies and authorities to places where they did not feel safe to go.

While the child recruitment practice continued, NP dealt with a number of abduction cases and helped that some children got released and found safe places for others to escape (re-)recruitment. Also families with whom NP had worked were encouraged and started to deal with

¹⁹² Development Strategies Group 2011:13-20.

cases on their own. But in that time no influence on the overall practice of child recruitment can be noticed: The numbers of abductions and forced recruitments seem to have gone up and down irrespective of NP's presence in certain areas. Unfortunately, NP did not use baseline surveys and statistical tools of monitoring which would have allowed to give solid evidence if there was any difference in regard to numbers of recruitment in those communities NPSL had a presence compared to those it had none. But in multiple internal reports (Programme Department reports, Quarterly reports etc.), it is mentioned that recruitments in the areas where NPSL was working increased at one point in time or the other, mention higher numbers of new cases of recruitment etc. If there was any direct impact NPSL had on the armed factions reducing their recruitment, it has not been reflected in any of the reports. The influence that NPSL has had seems 1. to make these factions release some individual children after they were recruited, and 2. and foremost, to change the response by civil society and authorities towards the recruitment.

The same what was stated for the practice of child recruitment is true for the protection of human rights defenders: Again individual lives were protected, but the overall human rights situation remains very shaky up to date. However, there may be a small contribution that NP made to the discussion about human rights that is happening in and on Sri Lanka, with the different UN reports having been informed by Sri Lankan HRDs who in turn may not have been able to continue their work without NP's protective presence at a certain moment in time.

What did change was the way authorities and civil society responded to the issue of child recruitment. NP – at least according to the assessment of some NP staff working longterm for NPSL – played a role in bringing the issue to public awareness and empowered people, in particular parents, to begin to resist the practices of child recruitment.¹⁹³ A direct and considerable impact that NP had – though it of course cannot be attributed to NP alone but to the joint efforts with UNICEF, local organizations, Colombo-based NGOs and civil society leaders was in regard of dealing with children who were released (or fled) from the armed groups. Already in 2007 NP and its partners created an awareness campaign on forced returns which “*was unexpectedly successful. ... Also the GoSL had produced its own leaflet about the rights of voluntary return as a response to the one produced by international actors.*”¹⁹⁴ NP helped to create a referral system among the various governmental, international and INGO actors involved with issues of former child soldiers, and later the government took the issue up and when faced with larger numbers of demobilized child soldiers developed a system involving the courts, Probation Department, Child Protection Unit, NCPA and the Ministry of Child Development.¹⁹⁵ It can be claimed that the capacity of authorities – at the local and regional level – was improved through NP's work.

Another area of impact that NP probably had is in regard to the capacity of community dealing with conflicts and violence. Here research would be needed to capture and substantiate this claim, but the reports at least in an anecdotal way show that community members, especially in the East, are dealing with intercommunal or intracommunal conflicts, and attribute the ability to do so to the trainings and support that NP gave them.

No measurable impact NPSL has had in regard to the macro-conflict (GOSL-LTTE):

*It is neither a major factor influencing the conflict situation in the areas of intervention in the East, probably also not in Jaffna. The general situation of security in the areas of intervention does not depend on NPSL's presence or activities. It is rather the opposite: the security situation determines NPSL's possibilities to move into certain areas or not. The most striking examples were the long forced absences of the teams from Jaffna, from Mutur and Trincomalee as well as regular difficulties in travelling between Valaichenai and Batticaloa.*¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Comment made by Rita Webb in response to the first draft of this evaluation.

¹⁹⁴ Completion Report to Oxfam Australia 2007.

¹⁹⁵ Aseervatham 2009, interview Florington Aseervatham.

¹⁹⁶ Hebib & Berndt 2007:25.

Berndt repeats the same finding in his 2010 evaluation conducted for zivik:

Impact of the three project could be observed mainly on the local and project level (peace writ little/pwl). None of the projects evaluated here have yet had a measurable impact on the dynamics of the macro-conflict in Sri Lanka (Peace Writ Large/PWL). This is not a surprise: Sri Lanka passed through one of the most violent years of its recent history and a protracted civil war was ended by armed force while the activities of the evaluated local peace initiatives happened.¹⁹⁷

One of the biggest disappointments of NP was that it was since c. 2007 not allowed to work in the areas that had been LTTE territory – NP felt that it could have made a difference there, e.g. in regard to IDP protection and support for former child soldiers.¹⁹⁸

In the following chart, I have tried to add the above-quoted information on outcomes and impact is added to the different types of activities identified above under 2.9:

Activity	Beneficiary	Examples	Outcomes	Impact
Protective presence in communities, regular visits to various communities.	Communities Civil society activists	Villages / towns where NP lived and worked Communities NP visited	People feel safer Potentially perpetrators are deterred	
Proactive presence at events like festivals, nonviolent actions etc	Communities Civil society activists	Temple festivals Street painting actions in Batt Hartals, IDPs protesting in nonviolent blockades against distribution of aid policies	People feel safer Incidents prevented	
Monitoring	Communities, IDPs	Situation at IDP camps	People feel safer Incidents prevented Other actors are informed in time to act	
Fast response to incidents or signs of early warning, by contacting actors, passing messages, bringing them together (facilitate dialogue)	Communities	Villages / towns where NP lived and worked, e.g. Mutur, Trincomalee, Jaffna	Incidents are resolved without further violence Tensions decreased People decide not to flee	
Protective	Activists /	Mothers	Local actors feed	Children or

¹⁹⁷ Berndt 2010:4.

¹⁹⁸ Interviews Mel Duncan, Tim Wallis.

Accompaniment while travelling and during critical visits	<p>human rights defenders</p> <p>Citizens wishing to make a complaint</p> <p>Youth threatened to be abducted for military service, or having escaped from it</p> <p>Probation officers, officers of HRC, of NCPA and other state authorities in visits to villages where they did not feel safe to go on their own, or had no means to go to otherwise.</p>	<p>accompanied to LTTE and Karuna group</p> <p>Citizens accompanied to make complaint with police</p> <p>HRDs meeting human rights rapporteurs and Sri Lankan HRC</p>	<p>information, for example on human rights violations, into national and international networks</p> <p>Potentially perpetrators are deterred</p> <p>Families are encouraged and pursue activities on their own</p> <p>Beneficiary finds it easier to get a hearing with the person/s s/he wants to meet with</p> <p>Request of beneficiary has higher chances of being met</p> <p>Children have been released</p> <p>Children have been moved to safer places</p> <p>“Disappeared” people have been accounted for</p> <p>Activists (e.g. religious leaders) continue their activities</p>	<p>others are released and eventually safe to continue with their lives</p>
Fact-finding	Communities, NGOs	Rumour control if incidents are reported	Further violence got prevented	
Offer safe space for meetings	CBOs, NGOs, community leaders, families	Ongoing activity in all field sites	People feel safer and are able to strategize and plan action in safe environment.	
Refer people to other agencies, authorities and (sometimes) Embassies	Former child soldiers HRDs Citizens generally	Child recruitment Human rights issues	Cases are better dealt with HRDs get asylum	Reintegration of former child soldiers Normalisation of life in the

				communities
Follow-up on cases by contacting authorities, agencies etc, work with authorities and agencies on reintegration of child soldiers, help people to get legal documentation (passports),	Child soldiers and their families	Child soldiers	<p>Authorities improve their capacity to deal with child and human rights issues.</p> <p>Children have been released</p> <p>Children have been moved to safer places</p> <p>“Disappeared” people have been accounted for</p> <p>People get their passports</p> <p>Children go through reintegration services</p>	<p>Reintegration of former child soldiers</p> <p>Normalisation of life in the communities</p>
NP raising and addressing issues	Citizens in affected areas NGOs in Colombo Authorities	Child recruitment	<p>Culture of silence is broken</p> <p>Citizens start to act</p> <p>NGOs in Colombo take the issue up</p> <p>Referral system within Child Protection Agencies: NPSL, UNICEF, SCiSL and ICRC is developed</p> <p>Authorities take the issue up and develop rules and systems to deal with released child soldiers</p>	Reintegration of child soldiers
Strategic support, discussion of approaches with activists	Activists, CBOs, Communities	Support of CBOs; With Foundation for Co-Existence to set up an early warning network in the East in 2005/06; early warning system in Batticaloa district in 2008	Activities of these CBOs and NGOs are initiated and successfully concluded.	

Networking at various levels	Between CBOs, NGOs, individual civil society leaders, authorities, large governmental and non-governmental agencies	Different topics	Cases are better dealt with. Sri Lankan civil society in the capital is taking a more pro-active response and advocacy role, including at international levels.	
Facilitating, nurturing and strengthening of permanent structures	Communities Activists	Peace Committees State authorities dealing with child protection (NCPA, probation, courts, police)	Incidents are prevented or resolved without further violence. Children are demobilized and taken to safe places. Referral system within Child Protection Agencies: NPSL, UNICEF, SCiSL and ICRC is developed. New civil society groups are formed.	Security in community has improved. Children are reintegrated and continue with their lives.
Facilitate funding	Child soldiers HRDs	Funding for vocational centres, for accommodation of HRDs having to hide in safe places.	Vocational training centres are able to accept more pupils, including former child soldiers and children at risk. HRDs are safe for a while.	Reintegration of these children.
Being based in vulnerable communities (often as the only INGO), through knowledge gathered in the course of other activities, and /or extra visits / patrols, serving	Communities	Isolated communities after Tsunami IDPs in difficult-to-reach areas in the East	Service provision for beneficiaries. Information that allowed those agencies to fulfil their mandate better.	People survive the emergency.

as eyes and ears for other agencies (SLMM, UNICEF and UNHCR, INGOs)				
Trainings (capacity-building in: Documentation and advocacy skills Community protection skills)	HRDs Communities CBOs Mediation boards	Trainings with HRDs in East and North, held together with local partners. So-called “UCP” trainings in the East, later also in North.	Ability to report HR violations improved. Community activists and mediation boards better capable of dealing with conflicts and incidents in their communities, including addressing them with authorities.	HR reports lead to a discussion on human rights issues (as limited as this still is currently). Communities experience less violence (?) ¹⁹⁹
general			Provide a symbol for the possibility of other ways than recurring to violence and repression.	

Table 1 Activities, outcomes and impact

3.2 Unintended outcomes and impact in the field

In principle, unintended outcomes and impact can be either positive or negative. It can be easily conceived that a project had positive impact that was never foreseen. In practice however, and this is also the case with NP in Sri Lanka here, the unintended outcomes and impact are those that were not wanted, that might have done harm – or clearly did do harm.

Hebib and Berndt 2007 looked at NPSL from the point of view of the Do-no-harm-criteria that Mary Anderson and her organization developed.²⁰⁰ They found the following critical points:

Using the visibility and privilege as foreigners at checkpoints, at military camps and with authorities who were reluctant to meet Sri Lankans (e.g. Tamils, including democratically elected representatives, for example in Trincomalee) has been an important instrument of NPSL’s work in the East. It cannot be denied – as also one Sri Lankan peace researcher commented – that this is a dangerous play with privilege. It makes oppression more socially accepted and contributes to preventing the population from standing up for their rights. In that way NPSL is contributing to not holding the state accountable, and by this to failing state as impunity - beside the uncontrolled proliferation of armed groups - is one of the symptoms of failing states that can be observed in many areas in the East. ...

¹⁹⁹ This is only indirectly inferred – there are no solid figures to substantiate this.

²⁰⁰ Anderson 1999.

Working against forced abductions and random – in some cases illegal – custody in the East, but having access to certain zones in the region only, NPSL cannot exclude substitutional effects: Militant groups have developed strategies and most probably also targets to fill their ranks. If this cannot be reached in a specific zone, they might recruit in more remote areas where there is less outside visibility. In the past this has been part of the LTTE strategy, the present leaders of the TMVP having been in charge of it. This might increase pressures on remoter communities which are anyway already economically and security wise disadvantaged.²⁰¹

However, there are no indications from later evaluations and reports that this second concern of the evaluators came true.

As described above, NP contributed to breaking the culture of silence in the East and accompanied people who sought to address wrongs publicly. But of course there were also many others, individuals and families, who were reluctant to meet NP staff in their homes, to talk about incidents that had happened, or otherwise through the fact that an INGO paid attention to them to expose themselves. They feared that they would thereby become more vulnerable to threats, ranging from “denunciation of children who ran away from an armed group by frightened neighbours, armed groups who tried to forcibly (re-)recruit children”.²⁰² Such threats happened all the time that NP was present, and it was probably a correct assessment from the side of these families and individuals that NP would not be able to protect them under all circumstances.

The problems that NP faced in regard to acceptance by GOSL which culminated in 2010 with the revoking of work visa are of course also to be listed here. Though NP was not the only INGO targeted in that way, and the events have to be seen to be the result of a general climate of rejection of all foreign interference into what GOSL considered internal affairs, afterwards NP has asked itself if it could have prevented what happened if it had not dealt with HRD cases that had high visibility, had been more careful in making it clear to the public that it protected HRDs but did not do human rights reporting itself, and if it had been building up better relations to members of GOSL which may have advocated for NP.

A last point in regard to do-no-harm is again one which Hebib and Berndt already address, namely that local activists may become dependent on international presence, and thereby what first was an empowerment of such activists in the end may turn out to become disempowerment.²⁰³ This is a point which NP certainly was aware of, and tried to counter by various strategies (see the section on impact above). However, the exit evaluation by *Development Strategies Group* as well as all reports from the time since NP left indicate that there is a strong feeling from the side of local activists, in particular of the human rights groups, that NP left a gap and that they have not been able (yet) to close that gap.

3.3 Appropriateness and validity of goal, objectives and strategy

As described above, NP changed the mandate of its project in Sri Lanka several times. These changes were mostly influenced by feed-back from the field project – it was mostly NPSL that suggested additions and changes to the mandate, and the leadership of NP abroad that agreed to the changes.

Original mandate before deployment	2004	2005	2007	2009
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²⁰¹ Hebib & Berndt 2007:30.

²⁰² Aseervatham 2009:36.

²⁰³ Hebib & Berndt 2007:29.

2002/03				
<p>1. The promotion of non-violence as a choice.</p> <p>2. Increase in safe space for civilian participation</p> <p>3. Demonstration of non-violent intervention in Asia</p> <p>4. Deterrence of relapse into armed conflict</p>	<p>Reduce violence to increase the safety of civilians in Sri Lanka so they can contribute to a lasting peace with justice”</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce the level of / and potential for violence - Increase the safety of civilians during the peace process - Improve possibilities for civilian participation - Increase the likelihood of peace with justice through civilian participation - Increase the confidence and creativity of civilians as a result of improving their safety - Deter resumption of violent conflict 	<p><u>Mandate:</u></p> <p>Reduce and prevent violence to increase the safety of civilians in Sri Lanka so they can contribute to a lasting peace with justice.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce the level, and potential for, and prevent violence. 2. To support and improve the safety, confidence and ability of Sri Lankan peacemakers and other civilians to address conflict in nonviolent ways. 3. Work with Sri Lankans to deter resumption of violent conflict 	<p><u>Three major objectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build the confidence of local organizations and individuals to address issues of human rights, peace, and justice with authorities at all levels. 2. Provide space and opportunity for networks to function at the community level, preventing or limiting violence. 3. Facilitate coordinated action for security at community, district, national, and international levels 	<p><u>NPSL’s Vision:</u> A Sri Lanka in which people of all ethnicities, religions and political beliefs are able to continue with their daily lives and engage in legitimate political and human rights activities without fear of harassment, defamation, arbitrary arrest, abduction, disappearance or death.</p> <p><u>NPSL’s Mission:</u> To reduce violence against civilians and increase the safety and security of vulnerable communities and individuals through the deployment of unarmed civilian peacekeepers to appropriate districts of Sri Lanka.</p> <p><u>NPSL’s Programmatic Objectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce children’s risk of being recruited or harmed by armed groups. 2. Strengthen existing mechanisms for the protection of civilians in the North and East and build the confidence of conflict-affected populations to use and trust those mechanisms. 2.b. Strengthen the mechanisms responsible for the protection of displaced people currently in Vavuniya district and build their confidence to use and trust those mechanisms. 3. Build the capacities of individuals and community-based structures in Sri Lanka to engage in unarmed civilian peacekeeping at the community level. 4. Improve the safety and security of human rights defenders (HRDs) so that they can continue to promote human rights in Sri Lanka. 5. Improve the safety and security of local election monitors so that they can help ensure free and fair elections at the local, provincial and national levels.

Table 2: The different mandates

The comparison of these formulations reflects the changing political environment (the term “peace process” got skipped in the later formulations), the learning curve within NP in regard to what it could achieve and what it could not – namely preventing the war breaking out again, and the shift from general work to programs that happened in 2009. As to appropriateness, the

objective to “*deter the resumption of violent conflict*” was certainly the one element in NPSL’s mandate that has in hindsight be considered to have been highly unrealistic, because NP did not set itself up in a way to have any chances for impact at that national level. Rather, the GOSL-LTTE conflict became for NP the context it worked in, striving to keep civilians safe and open space for political activism, not the conflict it worked on.²⁰⁴ There is however one qualification to be made to this observation: As described above under 3.1, NP had impact on inter-communal violence in the East, and it may even be speculated if that any of those incidents if they had been not stopped might have led in the worst case to wider-spread civil war in the East.

The other objectives can be considered to have been realistic insofar as NP achieved impact in these fields, and appropriate as they reflected the context changes.

Not reflected in the definition of the objectives, but much more relevant to the internal learning of NP(SL) in the first years was the reconsideration of NP’s basic tools. The original assumption had been that NP would apply three of four generic field methods: accompaniment, presence, monitoring.²⁰⁵ For some years, all activities were categorized according to these three or four terms, and only with the review 2005 NP started to realize that it in fact used a larger number of tools, and that also such a categorization would lead to a lot of duplication and overlap when considered to be NP programs.

The general understanding of NPSL to support communities on the ground to overcome tension and mistrust in a situation of ceasefire and high-level negotiation got obsolete with the dramatic change in the situation moving from negotiation towards open civil war. At present NPSL field teams define their areas of work according to their own understanding of the situation on the ground. They adapted their activities according to opportunities provided by the situation and the communities. There are no clearly defined goals based on an overall analysis of the conflict situation locally and nationally, and NPSL’s possible impact that are binding for all teams. Moreover, there are no clear and coherent criteria of impact.

Discussions with FTMs give the impression that they are struggling to understand their role beyond the general “accompaniment, presence and monitoring”. Even within teams the understanding of the objectives of NPSL presence may vary from team member to team member. Changes in team composition in the past had an important influence on the choices made and beneficiaries still mention those FTMs whom they felt being close to. More often than not, work plans are determined ad-hoc by requests from outside NPSL, opportunities, changes in the situation, etc. than by strategic planning with set objectives.²⁰⁶

Throughout most of the time of NP’s work in Sri Lanka, there was a certain tension between the need for strategizing and the pressure on the workers that arose because of work load and the number of people coming to NP’s door and asking for help. The evaluation of 2010 summarizes this issue well:

...The negative effect of the high degree of responsiveness, and quick turn-around time in supporting clients’ claims, also meant that there was little institutionalised and standardised process of vetting. This may have compromised NP’s work by leaving room for some of the accusations levelled against NP of not responding to the right claims, or inability to address/prioritise the most needy. It may have also have resulted in the more ‘ad-hoc’ nature of various staff responding to claims without the backing or knowledge of NP’s management during 2010.²⁰⁷

Here there are certainly dilemmas that cannot be solved that easily – certainly not by just closing the door and telling people ‘sorry, you are not our priority’. Such behaviour would destroy trust

²⁰⁴ The distinction between working „in“ and „on“ conflict was first made by Jonathan Goodhand 2001.

²⁰⁵ The fourth – the one NP was not meant to use – was ‘interpositioning’. These terms play an important role in the Feasibility Study (Schweitzer et al. 2001) though our study named advocacy as a fifth strategy and did not exclude peacemaking and peacebuilding activities (see chapter 2.8 of that study). In their exclusiveness were formulated probably because the well-known US-American activist and trainer George Lakey considers them to be the four methods of ‘nonviolent intervention’ (see Hunter & Lakey 2003).

²⁰⁶ Hebib & Berndt 2007:27.

²⁰⁷ Development Strategies Group 2011: 13-20. The problem was also recognized much earlier, see for example Grant 2004.

and eventually may endanger of all of the work in the field. Partly it may be an issue of resources – for example one or two staff persons could be commissioned with dealing with incoming requests and leaving others to pursue the more programmatic and strategy-based activities. Partly it is certainly also a question of SOPs – for example in the point that the evaluation refers to, the need for careful vetting of people coming to seek protection that may have been not done sufficiently at all times.²⁰⁸ And last not least what is required is staff with a very strategic mind set who are able to resist being overwhelmed with requests and do not develop a helper's syndrome but maintain the larger picture in their mind.

3.4 Sustainability

What has been said so far last leads directly to the issue of sustainability of NP's efforts. Sustainability is a criteria originally developed in the context of development aid, and it may be legitimate to ask the question how adequate it is to be used for a project of UCP. Unlike peacebuilding, peacekeeping is work that comes to an end when the danger of direct violence is reduced to what people may consider an acceptable level, conflict analysis shows that the danger of re-escalation is not flagrant anymore, and conflicts and violence are handled by the regular (state) structures and institutions created for that purpose (police, judiciary, etc.) However, the post-war situation in Sri Lanka (which could be dated to have begun in the East before the war in the North was over) was riddled with different types of security concerns. They ranged from alleged human rights violations by state organs – or the fear of civilians addressing these state organs because of experiences made in the past - over kidnappings and extrajudicial killings by mostly unidentified groups to the possibility of renewed tensions in the communities.²⁰⁹ For these reasons, NP began to work on sustainability both with local civil society as with authorities, and did not rely alone on what elsewhere is called security sector reform to take care of security needs.²¹⁰

NP's role in working with authorities to help them to improve their work was two-fold: NP played a role – together with other agencies – in setting up procedures and systems for dealing with demobilized child soldiers. And through its trainings with the mediation boards as well as through its earlier work with *Peace Committees* it contributed to improve the skills of the members of these institutions.

There were mostly four elements in NP's exit strategy that catered to the goal of sustainability for Sri Lankan civil society. The first two of them seem to have been realized, the others not:

1. Through the trainings in community protection and the work with the NCPA to strengthen local structures in a way that they would continue to deal with conflicts and issues on their own without NP's presence.
2. Volunteers were identified and trained as child rights defenders and actively working with government agencies and organizations in the promotion of children's rights (in Vavuniya).
3. Set up a network of human rights defenders who would formally and regularly meet and discuss and deal with human rights issues. This network has not met, the reason given was that the people involved anyway see each other regularly, and that therefore there was no need for it.²¹¹
4. Completing the cycle of these trainings, by supporting those who attended trainings for trainers to give trainings to more communities. There were some such trainings while NP

²⁰⁸ Interviews Atif Hameed, Tim Wallis.

²⁰⁹ See the report by ICG quoted in 1.1.2.

²¹⁰ See also Schweitzer 2005a:2.

²¹¹ Interview Steve Alston.

still was around, but it seems that this activity – perhaps also for lack of funding – stopped when NP exited from the country.²¹²

5. Former staff setting up CBOs / NGOs of their own that would continue parts of the work of NP. (However, some of the work is continued – one partner of NP in Vavuniya did join another centre to continue child protection work from there.²¹³)

It is too early to assess longer-term sustainability of what NP has left behind. It would require a field visit after perhaps one year of NP's exit to really see what has remained and what has gone. During the time of the war, it was very obvious how quickly things that had been achieved broke down again when the conflict went to a new stage, power factors shifted in the communities, people with whom NP had worked left the area (or even the country), or people working within the authorities were shifted to new positions. During wartime, all impact and changes achieved were very tenuous and vulnerable to such external factors.

²¹² Interview Florington Aseervatham.

²¹³ Alston & Schweitzer 2011, interview Steve Alston.

4. How it has been achieved

In this chapter I am going to look at various factors that influenced the performance of NP, in short, how it achieved what it did achieve, and how its work can be assessed in regard to the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency.

4.1 Key elements for effectiveness

Nonviolent Peaceforce's approach is to place teams of civilian peacekeepers in local communities in areas where there is violent conflict or the threat thereof. These teams live and work in one community, and extend their reach to neighbouring communities. The breadth of the outreach is difficult to determine exactly because it depends on the political situation and access as well as physical issues like the quality of roads, but it could be estimated that the teams spread out their reach regularly up to 2-3 driving hours (estimated a 100-150 km) from each field site which would mean that an area of about 315 to 700 square kilometres was covered.²¹⁴ The range was further widened by strategic networking with places that were farther away, and in Sri Lanka the work in the East profited by having up to four teams in two neighbouring districts which could re-enforce and mutually support the work by passing messages on, follow-up cases that originally had happened in the area of another team, etc.

A second strategic element was the office in Colombo which was not only the administrative centre but also took care of strategic relations in the capital – the place where all the national authorities, most important INGOs and NGOs are based.

As unarmed civilians without an official mandate the main leverage of NP were the relationships it built. NP became effective to the degree that it was able to use these relationships (to community leaders, district authorities, police, government agencies etc.) in a strategic way. Unlike other peace team organizations whose effectiveness to a larger degree is based on what Mahony and Eguren call their power of deterrence²¹⁵ through the message of “the world is watching” (and may respond with sanctions), NP's main approach is to prevent violence by convincing actors and those who originally may have been by-standers to change their actions.²¹⁶ This may include accompanying someone who received death threats to the HQ of the party / group from which the threats originated as NP has been doing in at least one case.²¹⁷ Particular importance then gets work with authorities (police, *Human Rights Commission*). Of course, the protection bonus of the international was something that also NP profited from, and it often ‘worked’. But as mentioned in 3.2, NP found repeatedly that there were limits to this bonus.

This is not claiming that relationship-building is always effective. As system theory teaches us, there are always very many elements to any given conflict, and other factors just may be more influential in determining the actions of any given player.²¹⁸ For example, the pressure a Government Agent (the highest authority in the districts in Sri Lanka) gets from Colombo may be weighted by her or him as more decisive than the cooperation and support that she or he received from NP on the ground. What is said here is only that in those cases where NP proved to be most effective, it can mostly be attributed to the network of relations that it had created, not to the threat of “The World is Watching”.

²¹⁴ Interview], Tiffany Easthom.

²¹⁵ Mahony & Eguren 2007.

²¹⁶ See also NP's website: “NP's approach to UCP, by contrast, relies solely on dialogue with the armed actors themselves to help them behave in ways that will reduce violence and protect civilians. This approach depends on building relationships of mutual trust and understanding that preclude the kinds of ‘naming and shaming’ that other forms of UCP may involve.” <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/ucp> [31.7.2012]

²¹⁷ The leader of the group denied being responsible, but the threats stopped at once. Interview Interview Tim Wallis.

²¹⁸ For the application of systems theory to the field of conflict transformation, see Körppen et al. 2008 and 2011.

Another important observation in this context is that while NP through its presence provided protection, it also was protected by the local community, and by people with whom team members travelled. This element of ‘double protection’ is something that can often be found when looking at examples of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. It is the community that protects its guests, watches out for threats against them and gives a warning if necessary.

NP did as mentioned not have an official mandate for its work in Sri Lanka (unlike it has now in the Philippines where it is a recognized official part of the international cease-fire monitoring mechanism). Therefore its status was like that of any private citizen – it could not call upon authorities, police or army to intervene other than by asking them to fulfil what their task anyway was (for example, the protection of civilians against violence). In an environment where the central government and many of the powers that support it were very sensitive about any kind of foreign intervention and pressure – a factor that became felt on the ground since latest 2006/07 when new registration and visa procedures for foreigners and for NGOs were introduced – NP showed great ingenuity in managing to stay as long as it did. The main reason for that was that ‘government’ in Sri Lanka was never a uniform bloc, and there were often quite striking differences between what was proclaimed as official policy in Colombo and how it was implemented in the districts, especially probably the districts where the majority of people did not share ethnicity and religion with the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority in Colombo.

NP managed to use the difference between practice and policy to their advantage with regard to relationship management with the government sector. For example, even though NCPA or other ministries at a national policy level may have not been willing to work with NP, at a local level NP worked with individuals within the government sector (GAs, CPROs, NCPA officers) unofficially and officially to expedite its work. This highlights the need for a pragmatic approach and flexibility that is needed in particularly hostile government contexts in post-war situations. This also means that organizations such as NP working in peace/HR sectors use their spheres of influence to enable their work unofficially, while pursuing strategies for policy level recognition such as MOUs with government ministries for legitimacy.²¹⁹

This observation is important and reflects the systems’ thinking that is needed in order to move and be efficient in a complex, conflict-ridden environment. The ambiguity of relations especially with official, governmental actors is nothing bad but is a successful strategy. Sometimes people consciously were willing to turn a blind eye as long as they had not to commit themselves.²²⁰ In the NP-internal discussions about the problems of 2010 it sometimes has been said ‘all this’ could have been avoided if NP had an official status with the GOSL beyond a MoU with a comparatively minor Ministry But: Not only can official status be revoked very quickly and easily, it also may limit flexibility and acceptance by actors who are critical or hostile to the central government. It is certainly true that NP neglected building relationships at the governmental Colombo level, but it was perhaps the neglect of cultivating advocates within the system in Colombo who may have mitigated the measures taken by those hostile to INGOs in general and NP in particular that made it impossible for NP to stay. Such advocates could not have changed negative security clearances for individual staff, but they may have had enough influence to argue with the authorities that NP played a useful role, and therefore should be allowed to keep some international staff.

Another essential source of effectiveness is of course non-partisanship in the meaning of not to be seen as taking sides in the conflict. In Sri Lanka, this translated to two basic rules: NP tried to get acceptance from all sides to the conflict, and it was very careful not to express any opinions or get involved in the discussions of how the Tamil-Sinhalese-Muslim relationships could be

²¹⁹ Development Strategies Group 2011:15-16.

²²⁰ Interview.

politically improved and the various issues solved.²²¹ (See 5.2.1 below for a discussion of the principle of nonpartisanship.)

4.2 Management and organization

The management and organization of NPSL has been studied in more detail in the report “Lessons Learned in the Fields of Organization, Management and NP’s Development” that accompanies this one. To summarize, I would just like to list some of the most important findings:

- NP’s decision to have the HQ for the project in the country (and not abroad) was essential for NP’s management because a basis in the capital was needed, but it did not take care of the well-known and almost universal issue of gaps between field project and HQ – instead, there were then two gaps and tension-ridden relations: between the field and the Colombo management as well as (at times) between Colombo and the international HQ, and also sometimes between NPSL as a whole and wider NP.
- Line management is required – NP started out with minimal line management; the teams of expats decided at the beginning in consensus about their work, or went in different directions with each team member pursuing projects of his / her own.²²² Two years after the founding of NPSL, the position of Heads of Office at the team level was introduced, and later NPSL moved towards a full line-management structure at all levels.
- Similarly, more division of labour within teams, with experts for various fields (e.g. training, child protection) increased the efficiency of the work.
- Very important has been the growing realization that it was essential to employ nationals in responsible positions, and stop running the project as a purely international one with Sri Lankans only in assistant and admin roles. NPSL did not go as far as later NP projects in creating a position of “National Civilian Peacekeeper” (NCP), but its field officers basically at the end were what NCPs are in other NP projects.
- Some aspects of NPSL’s administration were continuous fields of contention and dissatisfaction: Maintenance of organizational memory (which has to do with filing and reporting)²²³, the financial accounting in the face of very complex procedures involving multiple grants and several cost centres all over the world and NPSL’s reporting to wider audiences (especially the creation of ‘stories’ for the consumption of individual donors in the United States).

There are some major unresolved areas – unresolved in the case of later NP projects either. The more important of them are:

- The recognition of the important role of nationals in the project on the one hand, and the issue of their security and safety, especially after the project is ended and NP leaves the country, are two somehow conflicting matters.
- The detailed management structure (which positions to have to run a project as efficiently as possible) is something NP keeps experimenting with.

²²¹ This distinguished it from other INGOs, for example the German Berghof Institute, who sought through means of ‘second track’ diplomacy and dialogue support at the political level to facilitate a political solution. See for example Ropers in Körppen et al. 2008.

²²² “While in the East there has been over the last weeks or months an attempt at strategizing (most conspicuous result is the workplan produced in Valaichchenai), there is still need for much more efforts in this direction. Emergencies (which tend to come up almost everyday) seriously hamper these efforts. Also of concern is that at least in Jaffna and Matara individual FTMs pursued individual projects, often with little or no coordination with their team mates, and without a general willingness by the team mates to continue these projects if the FTM who started it was transferred or otherwise left the place.” (Review Visit 2005:15)

²²³ Interview Roland Röscheisen.

- The right balance between the power of leadership at field level and from the international HQ. Here NP experimented – though more due to personal styles than of a conscious decision – with different extremes, from minimal leadership given to the Country Director to the other extreme where HQ sought to directly lead what was undertaken on the ground. The right balance is certainly to be found in the middle of the two, and it requires a good and sound understanding of the field realities from the side of those line-managing the field staff from HQ.
- Uniform systems of monitoring and evaluation that allow comparison over the years.
- Retention of qualified staff – many field workers and managers have been leaving NP after a short period compared to other organizations. Only few people who started their career in NPSL are still with NP.
- Sufficient funds available at NP that can cover for grants coming late or taking care of needs and opportunities that the field projects may perceive but cannot be financed by a current grant at that moment.
- Dealing with internal security threats – indicators that a staff person may betray confidentiality or consciously seek to harm the project.

4.3 Efficiency

Generally, the question of efficiency is difficult to assess in the framework of this evaluation because this question did not play a large role in any of the earlier evaluations, and would require the detailed study of original documents (detailed expense records) that I had not available. Therefore, I have to leave it with some more general remarks and observations.

4.3.1 Cost efficiency

The project started in 2003 (which was not a full year) with costs of about 170,000 Euros, and went up to 370,000 Euros the following year. With the arrival of more FTMs and the purchase of more equipment (e.g. vehicles), the following two years the costs seem to have to up to more than 1 million Euros, with a peak of 1.2 million in 2006. From then the costs dropped again to around 800,000 Euros /year. The final year (with much fewer staff but extra costs for close-down) cost about 560,000 Euros.²²⁴

The start-up of the project was financed by private donors from the United States. Later, the percentage of grants from institutional donors grew until more than 90% of the costs were financed by governmental and large institutional donors. Already in 2003 a first institutional grant from Europe (50,000 Euro from zivik, Germany²²⁵) was received; later the number of grants went up, Cordaid being the second institutional donor in 2004²²⁶. 2005 and 2006 about 50% were financed through institutional grants. In 2007 NP made it its policy that at least 75% were to be financed through such grants.²²⁷ That remained the policy until 2009 / 2010 when NP aimed at financing its field projects fully through grants. However, this objective was never fully achieved and a small percentage remained of costs which needed to be covered by unrestricted money (donations).

What is probably most striking when looking at NP's budgets compared to budgets of other organizations is the large percentage that personnel costs take, and comparatively little costs for

²²⁴ See Appendix 1 of the internal report.

²²⁵ Annual Report 2003:20.

²²⁶ Annual Report 2004.

²²⁷ Hebib & Berndt 2007:11

programmatic activities. This has in the past been an issue for many donors, especially those who usually fund development and aid projects, because their efficiency translates to having as little infrastructure costs as possible. This is fundamentally different for NP, as today many of its donors probably have realized and understood: For NP, its field staff is its primary tool of programmatic work, and therefore the staff costs must be the main part of the budget. In this, NP's budget probably resembles much more a budget of an EU or OSCE or UN monitoring mission than that of a development agency. The structural problem that NP up to today faces with its work is that it is often these funding lines for development work NP applies to – also in absence of other funding lines which may be more appropriate for its work.

NPSL had regular annual audits in Sri Lanka, and NP was also audited every year at HQ level, and passed all these audits without greater problems. However there were problems with the financial accounting that accompanied NP over the years and which is described in more detail in the internal report – the field offices of NP sometimes failed to document all the expenses they incurred, probably due to lack of staff sufficiently knowledgeable in financial reporting requirements, there were issues that had to do with intercompany reporting between the costs incurred in Sri Lanka and those incurred for Sri Lanka at other expense centres (Brussels, Minneapolis) who for example took care of part of the salaries and insurances, and there were weaknesses in internal control and inability to track funds all the way from a donor to a specific output.²²⁸

4.3.2 Efficiency in achieving objectives

The objectives of NP were rather general, and therefore the question if objectives were achieved on time does not reflect well the reality of NP's field work. Also, the changing context of the war impacted the achievement of objectives. For example this becomes obvious when studying the 2009 evaluation for UNICEF. Several of the objectives and indicators listed there did not show an improvement of the situation in spite of NP's activities (see 3.1.4), but this is hardly due to a failure on the side of NP but rather due to the fact that the project with UNICEF was implemented during the last phase of the war. In 2010/11, other delays were due to floods in the East which stopped all activities there for some time, or to malicious media reports on NP which led to the postponement or cancellation of some activities because NP and its partners had to mitigate the threat these reports may have posed.

If the program or project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives is equally difficult to answer. Certainly, NP could have earlier made more use of Sri Lankan staff than it did, which would have somewhat decreased the costs and perhaps been more efficient both in regard to sustainability (passing on of skill sets) and saving problems arising because of need of translation etc. It may also have either decided against opening an office in Matara, or engaged in more strategic planning in order to find a useful role in that place. In the first recruitments of FTMs, NP certainly did not yet have the experience to always make good judgment about who would be most suitable for this task which led to a rather high number of turnovers.

4.3.3 Efficiency of relationships involved in implementing the program

The issue of relationships to various stakeholders in the field is analysed in detail in the internal report. NP built up and entertained on-going relationships to a large number of small CBOs as well as some larger NGOs and civil society leaders. It is concluded there that NP's experience of working with a wide range of local stakeholders or partners who at the same time often were

²²⁸ See Development Strategies Group 2011:21-22.

beneficiaries seems on the whole not be a bad model. It gave NP both credibility on the ground and allowed flexibility in terms of strategizing.

Besides these Sri Lankan entities, NPSL also entertained positive relations with a smaller number of international agencies and missions (both governmental and non-governmental) working in Sri Lanka. These were in particular UNICEF, UNHCR and the SLMM (see also 5.1).

NP's institutional donors were mostly contacted through the offices they maintained in Sri Lanka. With many of them, a rather close relationship was formed – so with UNHCR and UNICEF over child and IDP protection around 2005/2006, and with Embassies of some Western countries in the late 2000s on the protection of human rights defenders.²²⁹

The evaluations reviewed do not really reflect the issue, but from some monthly reports throughout the years it becomes clear that there were some mistakes made from the side of NP in regard to relations to donors. Mostly these had to do with late or insufficient reporting.²³⁰

These in turn may have been caused partly by the problems of financial accounting described under 2.4.3 in the internal report, partly due to the change from a general program to specific programs for which specific grants were acquired – a change which staff on the ground seems not to have fully kept up with at all times, partly by the frequent changes of management in Colombo and an insufficient staff structure.

As to the individual donors (mostly from the US), there was little information available for this evaluation other than that the fundraisers always struggled with the management of the project to get good, marketable 'stories' to convince donors that NP was doing good work. What they expected, it seems, were not so much political analysis or description of long-term processes but short stories of the sort – we came – we did this – the situation was solved (or the person/s saved).

Besides these stakeholders, there was also at least one important category of stakeholders of NP fully from outside Sri Lanka, namely NP's member organizations. As described earlier in this report, it had been these member organizations (MOs) who had by majority vote decided to establish a pilot project in Sri Lanka. And while not all MOs remained in close contact over the years with NP, many of them did, and asked regularly for information and updates on Sri Lanka. They got involved (in early years) in the recruitment of new field staff²³¹, some sent volunteers for the election monitoring spells (see 2.3.2.1), and NP Japan sent once or twice a delegation to visit Sri Lanka.²³² A much smaller role they played – with the exception of the supporter base in the United States – in fundraising. Here it was again only NP Japan who found any substantial amount of support. At home, member organizations wrote articles, gave presentations, informed about NP on their websites, and at least two or three (Italy, Germany) put together exhibitions of NP including the work in Sri Lanka.²³³ In 2007 at the International Assembly, they informed themselves on the progress in Sri Lanka and discussed the direction the project took. Other than that, the MOs on the whole did not play a very active role in the project and did mostly not try to intervene into the functioning of it.

As to the efficiency of all these relationships, things were certainly less than perfect. As already said in other places, there was a deficit in building relations with top-level government in Colombo, there were at time tensions between the various levels of NP involved in the line-management, donor relations may have suffered from loss of institutional memory from both sides – the side of NP as well as of the donor -, and NP's relationship to its member

²²⁹ PD Report 2006-7, Dutch report 2011 and the other donor reports of that time.

²³⁰ For example PD Report 2006-7 on problems of reporting to UNICEF.

²³¹ Passion et al 2003.

²³² Knox 2003.

²³³ Personal memory.

organizations (MOs) remains to date when just a new General Assembly is upcoming a rather unresolved area with expectations from both sides varying widely.

5. Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping

In this chapter I will discuss NP's theory and practice in relation to the wider field of different approaches that deal with armed conflict and the protection of civilians in such conflicts.

5.1 Comparison to other agencies

At the beginning of this report, it was mentioned that there were both before and during NP's time in Sri Lanka other agencies working on protection besides NP. With those who were there simultaneously – UNICEF, UNHCR and SLMM – NP developed good and productive relationships. With the UN agencies there was formal collaboration on the protection of child soldiers and IDPs, with SLMM informal contacts which mostly consisted of NP serving as 'eyes and ears' for SLMM on the ground.

NP did have a number of distinctive characteristics which gave it a comparative advantage to these other agencies:

- Unlike the Indian peacekeepers, it was not armed and therefore could not rely on force.
- It maintained a grassroots' presence in the middle of the conflict area.²³⁴
- It for most time and places had international staff on the ground, and directly implemented activities rather than relying on other organizations as implementing partners, which meant more security for the staff involved, and better direct control over the activities undertaken.
- It had a broad mandate, allowing to work on various groups of affected citizens (IDPs as well as child soldiers and human rights defenders) while the other agencies mostly only dealt with one of these groups. And it was not constrained as SLMM was to incidents in relation to the conflict GOSL-LTTE but looked at all kinds of violent conflicts, including those among various Tamil groups, Tamils and Muslims etc.
- Unlike PBI, NP works with fairly paid professionals who are managed in a line-management system and employs national staff in responsible positions.²³⁵

It also had comparative disadvantages:

- Unlike all others with the exception of Peace Brigades International NP did not have any formal status in Sri Lanka agreed in advance with GOSL (and with LTTE).
- Size-wise and from its reach, it did not cover all the affected areas.
- With the re-escalation of the conflict, it became barred from all territory under LTTE control.
- It was fully dependent on the good-will of the authorities and had no leverage resulting from international law or covenants the government had signed.
- Unlike the different governmental missions, it was dependent on grants and donations by various donors and continuously suffered from the resulting financial insecurity. (This disadvantage NP shares with PBI.)

This comparison shows that NP's approach is singular in many ways in regard to its ways of working and width of mandate. It would probably have increased NP's effectiveness if some of the comparative disadvantages listed here had been avoided or overcome.

²³⁴ PBI only had a house for 1,5 years in the East but otherwise confined itself to Colombo. (Coy 1997:10)

²³⁵ This is in NP's eyes an advantage, based on the experience of the early time in Sri Lanka when there was no proper line-management at all levels.

5.2 Lessons regarding NP's basic principles

NP's basic principles are nonpartisanship and nonviolence.²³⁶ The questions to look at in this section are: What role did these principles play? Were they at all important? How were they interpreted? As a third element the question of NP's orientation on the framework that International Law provides will be raised.

5.2.1 Nonpartisanship

Nonpartisanship is one of NP's basic principles, and has so been since the beginning. In 2011, the IGC confirmed this principle and prepared a one-page definition of what it means by it. This paper begins with:

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is a nonpartisan organization and is independent from any interest group, political party, ideology or religion. Committed to the dignity, human security and well-being of all, NP does not adopt partisan interests or take the side of any party.

By not taking sides NP means it will refrain from taking a position on political demands or views by any side in a conflict. But NP is not neutral in relation to the principles and values of international humanitarian and human rights law.

*Nonpartisan means not taking the side of any of the conflicting parties. Nonpartisanship also means avoiding public denunciations and other activities that would be considered humiliating, disrespectful or antagonistic to one or another party. ...*²³⁷

In its pilot project, NP has always been quite conscious of this principle and sought to apply it. I would like to start here with a longer quote from the 2007 evaluation which summarizes in my eyes nicely the early years of NP's work in Sri Lanka:

In the Sri Lankan context with a high polarisation of political positions in the macro-conflict between the GoSL and the LTTE and their allies and with a resulting segmentarisation of society, leading especially to mistrust between members of different ethnic groups, nonpartisanship means relating to different conflict parties as well as to different ethnic groups in an open and nonjudgemental way as well as avoiding to take up conflict positions that any of the parties stands for or appearing to be in favour of any such position.

This has not been spelled out in concrete terms by NP, neither in its mission statement nor in its mandate. However, the NPSL mandate suggests that for some of objectives and strategies a nonpartisan (or all-partisan) role is essential.

In practice, being an international NGO and being active in the field through internationally constituted field teams, NPSL has an easily accepted starting point for being and being seen as nonpartisan in Sri Lanka by the communities. (Though the GoSL often polemicalises against international NGOs.) Sri Lankan staff is employed from all communities (though not in every office equally distributed according to ethnicity) and feels respected. We did not observe any statement or form of expression that could be seen as partisan to one or the other party or community.

As described above, some stake holders criticise that NPSL is active through its field offices – that is what is visible to them – only in minority areas. It can be assumed that this criticism has to be interpreted as strategical statement in order to protect the stake-holders own position in the conflict, but that NPSL's nonpartisan stand is understood. Nevertheless, this is an area to pay attention to. Especially in Trincomalee District much more effort needs to be made to relate to the Sinhala community, including to holders of extreme positions, in order not to follow patterns of INGO attention to "oppressed minorities."²³⁸

As described above, NP originally had chosen Matara as one of the sites for field work mostly for reasons of demonstrating non-partisanship by working also in a Sinhala area. After the war, when with the defeat of the LTTE there seemed to have only one side of the conflict left as a political

²³⁶ Code of Conduct 2003, By-laws 2004.

²³⁷ IGC meeting 2011.

²³⁸ Hebib & Berndt 2007:45-46.

actor, there were some remarks made in NPSL if it would not have been advisable to maintain Matara or build up a basis in another Sinhalese area. While earlier NP dealt with the protection of civilians threatened by either side of the conflict, now the perpetrators were likely to be or be seen as allies to the GOSL. This laid NP open to charges of bias and partisanship.²³⁹ NP did not try to refute such allegations so much by referring publicly to international agreed and thereby 'neutral' standards like international law (what the approach for example of Peace Brigades International is) but by pointing out that its earlier work with child soldiers certainly was nothing the LTTE could have seen as support for them, and by trying to demonstrate that the work it did was useful for the rebuilding of the country.²⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the experience of Sri Lanka shows that nonpartisanship is a principle that must not only be maintained in the eyes of those doing the work, but in the eyes of those who see the work being done – it is primarily a matter of perception. And secondly, maintaining a stance of nonpartisanship is easier if there are two or several parties – if there is only one (organized) party left, it is much harder to establish oneself as a nonpartisan actor.

A special issue which of course affects nonpartisanship is how in general NP is seen and understood. Not being an aid agency and thereby doing work citizens in Sri Lanka were already familiar with, people at the beginning had a hard time to understand what NP was about. In particular, many seem to have suspected NP to be Christian missionaries, since that was one known role model for foreigners not directly involved in humanitarian aid. With a number of field members being Christians and exercising their belief in public, it was probably an assumption easy to jump to. The reports from early times and the first evaluation from 2004 reflect this:

Four local partners were formally interviewed. Without being able to do any scientific representative surveys the general conclusion is that many saw NP-teams as some form of Christian missionaries. This was not necessarily something they all regarded as being bad. The reasons for this judgement of the teams were many and different. That local people saw many Field Team Members going to church on Sundays was one frequent observation. The office in Jaffna was full of Christian symbols and many of the first contacts the teams took were with Christian individuals or organizations. These first contacts were interpreted as indications of the team's main interests.

Most local people were confused about the functions/ roles of the teams. That NP did not have money to support local projects or could offer education and training was something of a mystery for many. This confusion was not reduced by the ongoing debate on mandate for the project and the teams. To be able to clearly express what they are able, willing and have mandate to do would be a major improvement to build good relations on for the future.²⁴¹

This changed later when people began to understand the protection role that NP assumed. But the lesson remains that people will try to understand what a new actor coming to the field is and does by using their available experience and knowledge for comparison. Aid workers and missionaries are probably the two best-known such roles since they are found in most places of the Global South. Therefore it is essential to avoid misunderstandings and identification with these two roles by being especially careful about any acts or symbols that may facilitate such miscomprehension.

5.2.2 Nonviolence

The original versions of NP's mission statement used the term 'nonviolence' as do the By-laws and the Code of Conduct:

²³⁹ See also Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka 2010b.

²⁴⁰ Personal memory of meetings with officials in 2010/11.

²⁴¹ Johansen 2004: 17pp.

*Nonviolent Peaceforce is committed to nonviolence by which it means that it will never actively engage in or support actions which may result in physical or mental or spiritual harm, or loss of life. NP's adherence to nonviolence is unconditional, because it asserts that conflict transformation between and within countries cannot be achieved by violent means.*²⁴²

In today's version of the mission statement nonviolence is not mentioned, nor in the recent definition the IGC drafted on nonpartisanship.²⁴³ Instead, nonviolence is replaced by terms like 'unarmed' or 'civilian', probably to avoid principled debates on what nonviolence is and means. Such debates recurred many times in NP, right from its founding through the trainings for ICPs, the Sri Lankan review workshop of 2005²⁴⁴ to more recent discussions among NP stakeholders.²⁴⁵

Nonviolence certainly has very different meanings – in the mainstream it is often used for any kind of action that does not include violence ('the demonstration was nonviolent' meaning that no stones were thrown) to the strategic nonviolence as defined by Gene Sharp and his school and to the Gandhian meaning of nonviolence as a way of life, making an almost religious concept.²⁴⁶

NP's approach as it was practiced in Sri Lanka (and elsewhere) was very pragmatic – it meant not directly using armed protection (e.g. not employing armed guards), forbidding weapons in its premises and vehicles, seeking to ensure that all staff did abide by 'nonviolence' while working for NP (see NP's by-laws) and not working with beneficiaries or partners who were currently combatants or otherwise involved in armed struggle (other than just escaping from having been a child soldier).²⁴⁷ But NP did not hesitate to ensure services of legally legitimated armed forces like the police (or, though probably this plays a greater role in the Philippines and South Sudan, the military²⁴⁸), and it certainly does not aim to develop an organization's culture in line with the Gandhian understanding of nonviolence. Therefore, the tendency to de-emphasise the term 'nonviolence' is certainly meeting the current reality of NP.

5.2.3 International law

NP's relationship to human rights and other fields of international law is an area that unlike nonpartisanship and nonviolence has found to my knowledge very little attention and discussion. To start again with the original mission statement: There, "*protect human rights*" is one of the objectives of NP's mission, and the Code of Conduct states:

While recognising that the notion of universality of human right has been challenged on the grounds of different value priorities, NP sees the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other Conventions and Pacts regarding human rights as the broadest common denominator the peoples of the modern world have found so far.

*NP is committed to the principle and practice of promoting human rights in its work. It seeks and urges compliance with international humanitarian law and principles, and respect for human and peoples' rights amongst everyone.*²⁴⁹

There is no more mention of human rights protection in the current page on mission and vision on NP's website²⁵⁰, though human rights are an aspect of work in most if not all of NP's current

²⁴² Code of Conduct 2003. The Bye-laws 82004) are even shorter: "It is required that people be committed to act nonviolently when representing or acting on behalf of the Nonviolent Peaceforce."

²⁴³ IGC meeting 2011.

²⁴⁴ Discussion of topics 3rd day 2005.

²⁴⁵ NP Germany 2011.

²⁴⁶ There is too much literature on this topic to be easily quoted here. Instead, please refer to bibliography by Carter et al 2006.

²⁴⁷ See also Hebib & Berndt 2007:45.

²⁴⁸ See the monthly program reports of these projects.

²⁴⁹ Code of Conduct 2003.

²⁵⁰ <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/about/mission> [20.7.2012]

projects.²⁵¹ It may be speculated if this omission is partly an outcome of the experience in Sri Lanka where NP's problems with GOSL were explained by its work to protect human rights defenders.

What is generally called human rights work, is a rather vast collection of approaches and activities. Its basis are the international charters, treaties and covenants adopted by the United Nations and other recognized international bodies. Some typical approaches and activities include.

- Documentation of human rights violations (usually with the objective to allow later persecution, as well as documentation sometimes having some deterrent value)
- Prosecution of human rights violations, e.g. by bringing them to (international or national) courts, or advocating for such persecution;
- Advocacy for national (or regional) legislation reflecting the international covenants;
- Advocacy for revisions and improvements of the international covenants and treaties (see for example the developments regarding human trafficking or rape being recognized as a war crime)
- Concrete protection of people against the current threat of their human rights being violated.
- Transitional justice and 'dealing with the past' as a means of overcoming past violence are also related to it.²⁵²

NP's approach regarding human rights in Sri Lanka was mostly

- the immediate protection of people against human rights violations through presence and protective accompaniment,

In addition there was

- capacity building for local groups, individual HRDs and for communities how to protect themselves,
- capacity-building on tools of human rights monitoring and reporting, in cooperation with local human rights groups,
- Working with authorities to improve their capacity to provide protection, e.g. in the realm of child rights.

NP's troubles in Sri Lanka in 2010 were caused by its HRD program, mostly the protective accompaniment of HRDs and the capacity building for HRDs since the current government tends to interpret work on human rights directed against itself. It may be worth a discussion if that experience gives sufficient reason for NP to practically remove all reference to human rights from its mission and vision, or if there were other reasons not related to Sri Lanka leading to this decision.

My argument here is that NP as an INGO needs a legitimation basis for its work besides acting on invitation by a local partner, unless it operates in the framework of an official agreement as it does in the Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao/Philippines,²⁵³ and the framework of international law I can see as currently the best legitimation that there is since it has found wide approval in the international community.²⁵⁴ And, in addition, human rights are an aspect of most of NP's project. Therefore my advice to NP

²⁵¹ See the monthly reports on NP's website.

²⁵² For an overview over approaches of transitional justice, see International Center for Transitional Justice 2008.

²⁵³ See <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/fieldwork/all-projects/philippines-project> [26.10.2012]

²⁵⁴ I leave out here the discussion on the universality of human rights as it has been known to be raised by certain governments from the Global South since their objections seem to a large degree motivated by making themselves immune from charges of human rights violations. There is a bulk of literature on this, see for example Patman (ed., 2000) and Meijers (ed., 2001). On the question of the need for legitimation of the work of INGOs in general, see Lewer & Ramsbotham 1993 and Fisher & Zimina 2008.

would be to re-include these principles into how it describes its work. It is the most widely acceptable and least ideological of possible legitimizations.

5.3 NP's theory and practice and trends in the broader humanitarian and peacebuilding discourses

As already described in section 1.6, NP generally defines its work as “unarmed civilian peacekeeping” though in the field it may describe its work differently. In Sri Lanka, for example, rather the terms “protection” and “human security” were used since peacekeeping was a term connected to the negative memory of the Indian peacekeeping mission in particular, and to unwanted foreign intervention in general.²⁵⁵

Traditionally, peacekeeping means to control potential perpetrators of violence so that they “at least stop destroying things, others, and themselves.”²⁵⁶ It is one of the three ‘grand strategies’ of dealing with conflict, with peacemaking and peacebuilding being the other two, all three having to happen simultaneously if a conflict is to be transformed, and all three taking place at high, middle and grassroots’ level.²⁵⁷ Unlike peacebuilding, peacekeeping is a work that comes to an end when the danger of direct violence is reduced to what people may consider an acceptable level, conflict analysis shows that the danger of re-escalation is not flagrant anymore, and conflicts and violence are handled by the regular (state) structures and institutions created for that purpose (police, judiciary, etc.).

The case I would like to make here is however that this is different for unarmed civilian peacekeeping. The argument is pursued in three steps:

1. NP has always understood its mandate and niche to be in the field of protection. Though the first formulations of NP’s mandate are more vague than the current ones, that much always remained clear, and was observed inter alia by the evaluators in 2007:

*Presently, NPSL does not describe its role in terms of a strategy for conflict transformation in Sri Lanka. It seems that “preventing or reducing violence and threat”, “providing security” or “peace” are more common terms by which FTMs describe their work.*²⁵⁸

Many of NP’s activities were indeed alone about protection – of children against recruitment, of IDPs against violence, of HRDs against harassment, kidnapping and extrajudicial killings, of supporting national election monitors during election times. Among these, the work with child protection was the only one where there was clearly indication of longer-term impact on the response by society and state to this practice of the armed groups – namely the institutionalisation of mechanisms to deal with the protection and reintegration of child soldiers, and NP’s capacity building for actors dealing with these issues. In the other three fields, there were outcomes – people being protected, lives being saved – but none of the evaluations claimed that any lasting positive change was achieved through NP’s efforts.

2. The picture is however somewhat different when looking at the fifth area of NP’s work: the dealing with inter- and intra-communal conflicts in the East. Here NP did not only facilitate dialogue among actors to handle upcoming burning issues, but through its support for early warning systems, *Peace Committees* and through its trainings in community protection strategies contributed to mechanisms that helped communities in the East to develop more resilience

²⁵⁵ Numerous reports from Sri Lanka over the years are full with the term “human security” while almost none uses the term UCP. See for example Sri Lanka Project Report 2005 1/2-3 and BMZ report 2010. Even these terms became very controversial at the ground levels (after c.2006), with some agencies (like CARE) even moving away from the staff titles such as “Protection Officers” (just at the time we thought we could move in that direction) due to the government’s insistence that it was their role to protect its citizens. (Comment by Rita Webb to first draft of this report.)

²⁵⁶ Galtung 1996:103.

²⁵⁷ I have discussed these strategies at length in Schweitzer 2010b. For a summary, see Appendix 2.

²⁵⁸ Hebib & Berndt 2007:15.

against armed violence. Though it was not possible to substantiate this with solid figures, the various evaluations and reports indicate that this capacity for conflict-resilience was something that has remained with the communities.

3. The conclusion that I am drawing from these observations is that UCP cannot be considered just the unarmed equivalent of armed peacekeeping, limiting itself to ‘controlling the perpetrators’. Doing just that, it would still be a valuable humanitarian effort saving lives in conflict. But if restricting itself to this function, UCP would fail to achieve longer-term impact and achieve its ultimate goal: the prevention of violence. Only if it includes techniques drawn from the fields of peacemaking and peacebuilding – dialogue between actors in conflict (which belongs to the category of peacemaking) and capacity-building (peacebuilding), it is able to prevent violence from re-occurring.

An objection against this argument may be raised: ‘UCP is about opening space so that others deal with the conflict’. The question is: Are these others always available? NP’s work in Sri Lanka (and, I believe from my own knowledge of the work of NP in other countries, also in later projects) indicates that NP’s facilitation of dialogue to deal with conflicts at the local or regional level has been quite successful. It is still the ‘others’ –meaning local leaders - who deal with the conflict. NP has never acted as a Mr. Holbrooke or Mr. Ahtisaari mediating conflicts by presenting (and sometimes enforcing) peace plans at the track 1 level. In the language of peacemaking it is rather ‘good offices’ or at best facilitation what NP offered, and at least in Sri Lanka never at the track 1 level.

In the field of humanitarian assistance it has long been learned that it is better to help people to grow their own food than to just send food to feed them – distributing food helps people to get over one season, helping them to restart planting will feed them in a sustainable manner. The same I would like to maintain goes for protection against violence. This is not an argument to expand the mission statement and move away from being an agency focussing on protection. It is an argument that when wanting to reduce violence and protect civilians in situations of violence effectively and sustainably, capacity-building and facilitation of dialogue to mitigate conflicts and agree on mechanisms how to avoid future conflicts to become violent are necessary elements.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ In appendix 5 several approaches towards protection are compared with each other.

6. Conclusions

NP has been learning many lessons in regard to what it has set out to do: to establish itself as an organization capable of promoting, developing and implementing unarmed civilian peacekeeping as a tool for reducing violence and protecting civilians in situations of violent conflict. The project in Sri Lanka was NP's pilot project, and NP grew a lot over the past ten years not only in size (from one project to four field projects in late 2011), but also in experience and knowledge how to go about UCP, developing particular areas of expertise within the wider field of protection techniques, and how to manage all the various elements and tasks coming with it. This evaluation is an evaluation of the pilot project, not of NP as a whole, but the following lessons and conclusions can be drawn from the experience in Sri Lanka:

1. It is important to have a good process of inception, planning and preparation of a project that includes good assessment, strategizing as well as continuity in regard of handling contacts and the planning process.
2. It is equally important to have a realistic mandate which is at the same time informing and guiding the development of concrete programs and is flexible enough to adapt to changing context in the country.
3. The objectives need to be formulated in a way that there are clear criteria for when the mandate is fulfilled and need to include issues relevant for the eventual exit (exit strategy), in particular questions of how to make NP's efforts sustainable beyond NP's stay in the country.
4. In all likelihood an exit strategy must include capacity building for both governmental and civil society local actors to take on tasks of protection and handling conflict after NP is gone, since rarely it can be assumed that the situation would improve so radically and quickly that all these tasks can be left to the legitimate state authorities alone.
5. The main sources for effectiveness are good relationships and trust-building which is a process that takes some time, and requires high standards of professionalism, a keen awareness on how one's actions may be perceived by others, training and personal skills of field staff.
6. NP's approach of placing its teams in the middle of conflict zones has proven to be a highly effective tool in this context.
7. For successful strategizing as well as evaluation thinking in systems is important – systems' theory is the most adequate theoretical tool for moving and be efficient in a complex, conflict-ridden environment.
8. Including national staff as peacekeepers or comparable roles does not only make the own work more effective, but is at the same time one step towards sustainability since this staff remains in the country after the internationals are gone.
9. People in the target communities will try to understand what a new actor coming to the field is and does by using their available experience and knowledge for comparison. Aid workers and missionaries are probably the two best-known such roles since they are found in most places of the Global South. Therefore it is essential to avoid misunderstandings and identification with these two roles by being especially careful about any acts or symbols that may facilitate such miscomprehension.
10. Good management and administration practice in all fields (from book-keeping to filing, human resource management etc.) is essential – shortcomings in these areas automatically impact the work in a negative way.
11. NPSL was not able to deal with the macro-conflict. It was able to deal with locally-driven conflicts, but had no influence on what happened at 'track 1'. In order to have influence on the conflict as a whole, what is probably required is a mandate backed by the main actors to

the conflict (what was not the case in Sri Lanka) as well as sufficient resources (personnel-wise, financially and know-how-wise).

12. To be perceived as non-partisan or impartial is more than nonviolence a principle that has proven essential to NP's approach and work.
13. For both practical reasons and for NP's overall legitimization, NP should make more reference to international law and human rights covenants when explaining and justifying its interventions.
14. Unarmed civilian peacekeeping is not just the unarmed version of military peacekeeping and the functions that military peacekeeping has in dealing with a conflict. If it does not want to remain a purely humanitarian effort of saving lives at a particular point in time, it needs to include instruments that belong to peace-making and peace-building – 'good offices' and provide space for dialogue as well as capacity-building of local communities and civil society activists.

Two more conclusions may be directed more towards stakeholders of NP than of NP itself:

15. Missions of UCP can be both governmental and nongovernmental. As the example of NPSL shows, nongovernmental may have more flexibility to respond to needs on the ground.
16. Funding of UCP missions requires special budget lines – not those for development activities but budget lines dealing with security and 'conflict prevention'.

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²⁶⁰ There is a later version of the article (file name: FurnariEbG26juni06efcorrected.doc) which bears the letter head of NP and is not named a draft; however, a comparison of the two texts shows that version to be just a short version of the “draft” one quoted here.

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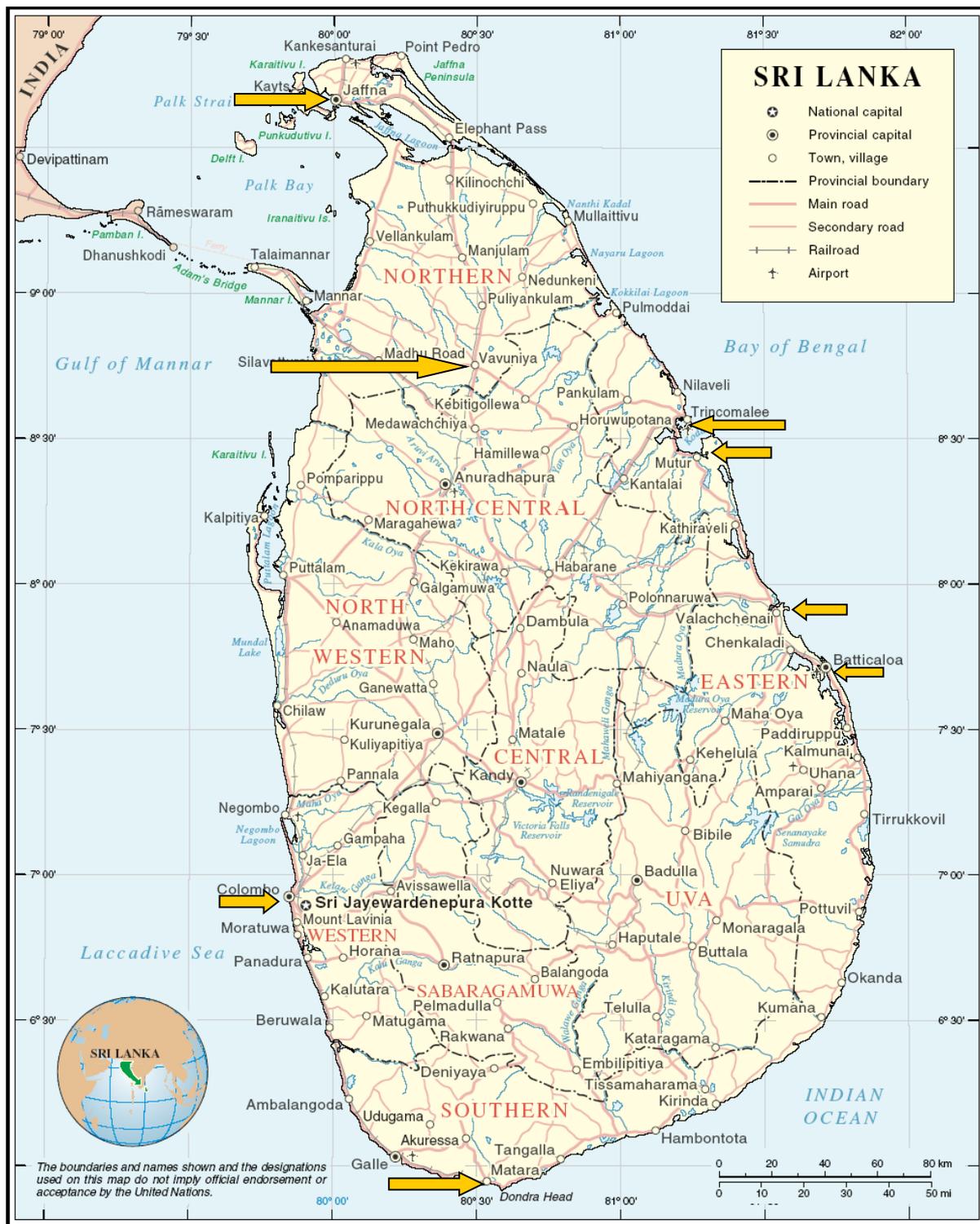
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Appendix 1: Map of Sri Lanka



Map No. 4172 Rev. 2 UNITED NATIONS
January 2007 (Colour)

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

Copied from Hebib and Berndt 2007, Annex IV.

Appendix 2: Strategies of conflict intervention

	Peace-making	Peacekeeping	Peace-building	Public Information, Support, Protest and Advocacy
Problem	Perceived incompatibilities of interest	(Potential) violent behaviour	Destruction (material and immaterial/social) and lack of structures and relations necessary for sustainable peace with justice	a) Lack of knowledge about the events in the conflict b) Behaviour of other intervening actors
Function (s)	Finding a negotiated solution; dealing with the interests and positions of conflict parties	Control, prevent or reduce violence	Deal with the destructive processes that accompany war	Information
			Address relationships	Change the behaviour of intervening actors.
			Deal with structural issues	
Frequency in conflict stages	Most frequent during escalated conflict; more rare before escalation to violence and after cease-fire	In all stages.	Most frequent after cease-fire but also much present during war; more rare in this case before war	Most frequent during war.
Target groups chosen by state actors	Governments, leaders	Military, armed forces	State and large categories of population	Governments
Target groups chosen by non-state actors	Mostly middle and grass-root level, rarely governments	Military, armed forces; violence-prone groups and individuals, death squads etc.	Both large categories of population (rarely state) and specific groups and locations	Governments, international organizations; 'society' in general, own constituency
Basic Character of	Law	Force	Material aid	Information
Instruments used	Negotiation	Nonviolent Deterrence and reference to international law	Information	Material Aid
	Force	Persuasion and	Immaterial	Immaterial

		relationship building	support	support
			Law	Protest
			Force	Persuasion
			(Civil disobedience)	Law
<i>Schweitzer 2010b, expanding on a model by Ryan 1995:104</i>				<i>(Civil disobedience)</i>

Appendix 3: Approaches to protection

	Peace keeping	Human Security – Wide concept	Human Security – narrow concept	Responsibility to Protect	Protection of Civilians in war	Armed Violence Reduction	Civilian Peacekeeping (NP)	Conflict Transformation (peace-building, ,peace writ large’
First reference	1948 onwards	1994	c. 2000	2001	1999	c. 2005	1997 (as theory – practice since 1930s)	Newer literature since 1990s
Definition	Each peacekeeping operation has a specific set of mandated tasks, but all share certain common aims – to alleviate human	Freedom from Fear and from Want – security of people (not of states)	Human security focuses on the protection of individuals, rather than defending the physical and political integrity of states from external military threats – the tradition	'each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from four types of crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity'	Protection of civilians, protection understood as assuring the safety of civilians from acute harm (O’Callaghan & Pantuliano 2007)	‘Armed violence includes the use or threatened of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm, which undermines development’ AVR aims at reducing the risks and impacts	prevention of direct violence through influence or control of the behaviour of potential perpetrators by unarmed civilians who are deployed on the ground. (Schweitzer)	Four guiding principles. 1. War as an instrument of politics and conflict management can and should be overcome. 2. Violence can and should be avoided in structures and relationships at all levels of human interaction. 3. Constructive

	suffering, and create conditions and build institutions for self-sustaining peace (UN webpage)		nal goal of national security. (HSRP webpage)	(ICISS)		of armed violence.’ (OECD 2009)		conflict work must address the root causes that fuel conflict. 4. All constructive conflict work must empower those who experience conflict to address its causes without recourse to violence. Ultimately, this is about changing individual attitudes and addressing the issue of structural reforms. Create conditions that allow for conflict to be dealt with in constructive and peaceful ways, i.e. to transform the relations of violence that too frequently define the experience of conflict. (Berghof Handbook)
Main Problem	War or threat of war	Threats to economic	Threats stemming from violence	Genocide, war crimes, ethnic	Violence	Armed violence	Violence as means of dealing with	Violence as means of dealing with conflict

		security food sec health sec environ- mental sec persona- l sec commu- nity sec - political sec	to individu- als and to societies at risk.	cleansing and crimes against humanity			conflict	
Relati- onshi- p to confli- ct	Politic- al conflic- t	Political conflict include- d but not main issue	Political conflict as main issue	Political conflict leading to these crimes	Political conflict as cause of problem	Conflict only as one source of armed violence	Political conflict	Political conflict
Type s of viole- nce	Direct , militar- y violence	All (direct and structur- al)	Direct, political violence	Direct, political violence Unclear of crime or domestic violence included.	Direct violence. Crime or domestic violence if caused by conflict usually included	Armed violence (political, crime, domestic)	Direct, political violence	All forms of violence, direct and structural and cultural
Main actor s	Intern- ational militar- y with civilian comp- onent integra- ted in missio- n; Somet- imes civilian missio- ns	Govern- mental and non- govern- mental	Govern- mental and non- govern- mental	States	Internat- ional NGOs working in conflict areas; Govern- mental monitoring and peacekeep- ing missions	Nongove- rnmental and govern- mental	Govern- mental and non- govern- mental	Govern- mental and non- govern- mental

	UN OSCE AU, others							
Relationship to conflict transformation	Peace keeping and post-war peace building	address underlying causes and long-term implications of conflicts	address underlying causes and long-term implications of conflicts	Indirect (requests peace-making)	Relationship to peacebuilding	AVR serves the broader goals of statebuilding, peacebuilding and development (OECD)	Necessary element of conflict transformation (Schweitzer)	IS conflict transformation
Most important references	UN webpage Ramsbotham / Woodhouse 2001	UNDP 1994	Human Security Research Project (HSRP)	ICISS 2001 Evans 2008	International Committee of the Red Cross 2008 (reiterates findings of conference in 1999) UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2002. Mahony 2006 O'Callaghan & Pantuliano 2007	OECD 2009 Danish Demining Group	Schirch 2006 Wallis 2010 Schweitzer 2010a	Lederach 1997 Anderson & Olson 2003 Paffenholz (ed) 2010 Berghof Handbook (since 1999, work in progress)

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