



FINAL REPORT

End of Project Evaluation: Youth Participation and Engagement for a Healthier, Equitable,
Safer and United Sri Lanka

Youth Community Leadership Initiative

MARGA INSTITUTE

941/1, Jayanthi Mawatha, Kotte Road, Ethul Kotte, Sri Lanka.

www.margasrilanka.org

Project/outcome Information		
Project/outcome title	Youth Participation and Engagement for a Healthier, Equitable, Safer and United Sri Lanka	
Project Number	Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway: 00125633	
Corporate outcome and output	<p>Outcome 1: Next-generation young leaders productively engaged with state and non-state actors to promote peace and social cohesion.</p> <p>Outputs 1.1 Capacity of youth parliamentarians and youth leaders enhanced to effectively engage in political and civic spaces and advocate for national unity the setting-based approach for health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Outputs 1.2: Youth Leaders, community and youth volunteers and civil society jointly/ collaboratively address conflict and emergency-related psychosocial and relational needs in a created healthy community setting.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Target state and non-state actors to encourage youth voices and advocate national unity and social cohesion using established platforms.</p> <p>Output 2.1: Target state and non-state institutions exposed to principles and the evidence base relating to the importance of youth participation in national unity and social cohesion approach.</p> <p>Output 2.2: Target state and non-state institutional platforms strengthened to promote youth responsible participation in developing cohesive, safe and healthy settings</p>	
Country	Sri Lanka	
Region	South Asia	
Date project document signed	09-Oct-2020	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	25 January 2021	25 July 2023
Total committed budget	USD 1,499,998.66	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 1,353,427.08	
Funding source	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund	
Implementing party¹	WHO, UNDP, UNV (Sri Lanka)	

¹ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Description
CAP	Community Action Plan
CNA	Community Needs Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVC	Community Volunteer Centre
FLICT	Facilitating Initiatives for Social Cohesion and Transformation
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
LMS	Learning Management System
MAS	MAS Holdings (a private company)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NYSC	National Youth Services Council
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PL	Project Lead
RFP	Request for Proposal
RP	Resource Person (trainer)
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WHO	World Health Organization
YCLI	Youth Community Leadership Initiative
YP	Youth Parliamentarian
YPI	Youth Promotion Initiative
YPS	Youth Peace and Security

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive evaluation of the "Youth Participation and Engagement for a Healthier, Equitable, Safer and United Sri Lanka" project (YCLI), implemented from January 2021 to July 2023. The purpose of the evaluation was to:

1. Assess the progress made in achieving the expected results.
2. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency, of progress made towards impact, sustainability management and monitoring outlooks of the project
3. Analyze how cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women and youth volunteering and principles have been integrated into implementation.

The evaluation serves the purpose of offering the consortium and the donor an appraisal of the project, including its design, implementation, and outcomes. Its objective is to assess the project's relevance, achievement of objectives, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, projected impact, sustainability, and consideration of gender and inclusion, compared to the original project proposal.

Interventions implemented during the entire project period from January 2021 to July 2023 is subjected to evaluation. The evaluation integrates gender equality and human rights-based approaches and was guided by the principles of do no harm, impartiality, transparency, inclusivity and participation.

- Geographic scope: Island-wide from different parts of Sri Lanka.
- Thematic scope: The evaluation covers all peacebuilding, health and well-being promotion among youth leaders.
- Sampling Scope: The evaluation is limited to the interventions implemented under all two outcomes of the project targeting 573 young leaders and youth parliamentarians, and project beneficiaries in the community needs assessments and action plan phase.

Funded by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund, this collaborative initiative brought together the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), and the state sector support from the National Youth Services Council (NYSC) to empower young leaders in Sri Lanka to promote social cohesion and development. The project, designed as a Youth Promotion Initiative, recognized the crucial role young people play in shaping civic spaces and contributing to sustainable peace. Employing a unique "Healthy Settings Approach," the project equipped 573 young leaders from diverse backgrounds with the knowledge and skills to address social issues, promote wellbeing, and advocate for positive change within their communities.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, including document review, semi-structured interviews, a survey of 142 youth participants, and six focus group discussions with beneficiaries of the community projects implemented under the project. The evaluation framework assessed the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, integration of gender equality and human rights principles as well as project management and monitoring aspects.

Key Findings

Relevance: The project addressed a genuine need for youth leadership development amidst Sri Lanka's complex socio-political context marked by the legacy of conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis, and the Aragalaya protests. The "Healthy Settings" approach was innovative and relevant, offering a unifying framework to engage diverse stakeholders. The selection of implementing partners effectively leveraged their expertise, although overreliance on a service provider with limited capacity presented some challenges. The focus on youth parliamentarians, while strategically sound, highlighted the need for a more inclusive youth parliament structure.

Coherence: The collaborative framework, with joint outcomes and pooled funding, fostered a strong sense of partnership between the UN agencies, NYSC, and CSOs. However, inconsistent communication, unclear roles and responsibilities, and the dynamic nature of decision-making processes created challenges, particularly during the training module development and procurement phases. Despite these hurdles, the project team demonstrated adaptability in responding to unforeseen challenges, highlighting the importance of proactive risk assessment and contingency planning for future initiatives.

Effectiveness: The project's two-phase residential training program successfully enhanced participants' knowledge and skills in areas like conflict resolution, gender equality, leadership, and community engagement. Participants demonstrated positive attitude shifts towards community engagement, volunteerism, and political participation. The project fostered inter-ethnic relationships and a sense of unity, contributing to social cohesion. However, the community project implementation phase faced challenges in adopting a fully participatory approach due to time constraints, and budget limitations.

Efficiency: While the project received sufficient financial, technical, and human resources, its overall efficiency was hampered by delays in implementation, bureaucratic hurdles, and challenges with service provider performance. The project's reliance on a centralized training model limited its flexibility. The selection process for participants could have been more effective in identifying individuals with the commitment and availability to fully engage.

Impact: The project demonstrably increased participants' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards community engagement, contributing to social cohesion. Community projects, while limited in number, successfully addressed specific community needs, showcasing the potential of youth-led initiatives. However, long-term sustainability remains a concern due to limited funding and the absence of a robust follow-up mechanism.

Sustainability: The development of an LMS, digitization of training materials, and the planned integration of modules into NYSC's programs offer potential for sustained impact, but their effectiveness hinges on NYSC's commitment and capacity. Existing networks of young leaders and strong relationships with CSOs offer potential for future collaborations. However, the lack of a dedicated organization to oversee post-project activities and support the youth network presents a challenge to sustaining the project's impact.

Gender Equality and Human Rights: The project demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity. A dedicated gender module and a proactive approach to addressing gender-related concerns fostered a more inclusive and empowering

environment for women. The project facilitated a near 40-60 (40% female-60% male) gender balance amongst participants and encouraged women's leadership. However, addressing deeply ingrained societal barriers to women's participation in political leadership requires more transformative interventions and ongoing support.

Project Management and Monitoring: The project employed a structured approach to project management and monitoring, utilizing regular meetings, a technical advisory group, and personalized development plans. However, inconsistent communication, unclear roles and responsibilities, and limited monitoring of community projects hindered the effectiveness of these strategies. The project's results framework, while useful, lacked sufficient qualitative indicators and a long-term perspective to adequately assess the project's overall impact and sustainability.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The YCLI project successfully addressed a critical need for youth leadership development in Sri Lanka, equipping young people with valuable skills and knowledge while fostering a greater commitment to peacebuilding and community engagement. The project fostered a strong collaborative framework and demonstrated a positive impact on participant development, but faced limitations in its project management, service provider capacity, and training model. While the project laid a strong foundation for promoting social cohesion and youth empowerment, its long-term sustainability hinges on addressing these limitations and ensuring the continued engagement of national partners, particularly NYSC, in carrying forward the project's legacy.

Recommendations of the evaluation focus on the following:

1. Develop comprehensive risk assessments and contingency plans to anticipate potential disruptions and enhance project adaptability.
2. Future projects should implement a more rigorous vetting process for selecting service providers, prioritizing experience, capacity, and ethical conduct.
3. Ensure broader participation and flexibility, explore and pilot a more geographically decentralized or hybrid training approach.
4. UN agencies should establish and communicate to stakeholders a clear project coordination framework with well-defined roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, complemented by robust communication protocols and centralized platforms for information sharing.
5. Strengthening M&E frameworks to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative indicators, including long-term outcomes and disaggregated data, is crucial for capturing the project's full impact.
6. Integrating a comprehensive gender equality strategy, actively addressing societal barriers and promoting women's leadership, is essential for achieving meaningful and sustainable gender equality.
7. Future projects should prioritize allocating increased funding and time for youth-led community projects to enhance their scope, impact, and sustainability.
8. Future projects should consider fostering a multi-faceted approach to community engagement, leveraging trainer expertise for mentorship together with CSO support

9. Exploring the feasibility of a dedicated Youth Leadership and Peacebuilding Foundation
10. Establishing a detailed plan for documenting and disseminating project successes, challenges, and lessons learned will enhance knowledge sharing and contribute to best practices in the field.

01 Introduction

This Report is developed as part of the 3rd deliverable of the final evaluation of the WHO-led youth development project in Sri Lanka titled “Youth Participation and Engagement for a Healthier, Equitable, Safer and United Sri Lanka”. This report is the outcome of an initial desk reviews, In-depth interviews, key Informant interviews, quantitative surveys, consultations with WHO, UNDP, and UNV, teams in Sri Lanka and the National Youth Services Council of Sri Lanka (NYSC). This report aims to disclose the objectives and methods of the evaluation, as well as to disclose the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation.

Primary Intended Users: The evaluation findings will be relevant for stakeholders, including government counterparts such as NYSC (the primary government counterpart), the Ministry of Youth and Sports, implementing partners WHO, UNDP, UNV, CSOs, and development actors involved in peacebuilding and reconciliation, including PBSO/PBF.

The Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka is a mechanism established in 2010, for politically inspired young leaders to meaningfully engage, contribute to national unity and issues affecting youth at the national and sub-national level and place them at the heart of decision making. Using the Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka as a launching pad, the project under review aimed to improve access to opportunities for young aspiring leaders to meaningfully engage in promoting social cohesion and development that will enhance their political and civic representation and thereby address the issues of trust and lack of recognition they receive as leaders in their own communities.

The project employed a ‘Healthy settings’ approach as a vehicle for guiding young leaders to identify how they can contribute to more inclusive development processes that promote social cohesion and prevent conflict and violence in society. A ‘**Healthy Setting**’ is ‘a place or social context in which people engage in daily activities in which environmental, organizational, and personal factors interact to affect health and wellbeing’.

As such, by employing a healthy settings approach, the project attempted to enable young people to identify ways in which they can constructively influence their day-to-day surroundings, including personal factors that affect community wellbeing. An independent evaluation of the project was commissioned in March 2024 with the objective of providing evidence of the project’s progress made in achieving the expected results, and assess it based on perspectives of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, gender equality and human rights and project management and monitoring in achieving its objectives.

02 Description of the Evaluation

Following is a concise description of the Project as understood by the evaluators based on information extracted from project documentation:

Description of project rationale: The project aimed to improve access to opportunities for young aspiring leaders to meaningfully *engage in promoting social cohesion and development* that will enhance their political representation and recognition in society. In order to achieve this goal, the project employed the ‘healthy settings’ approach introduced in 1980 by the World Health Organization as a ‘holistic and multi-disciplinary method which integrates action across risk factors’ to promote health and community wellbeing. This all-encompassing approach intended to pave way for the project to systematically intervene on areas affecting social cohesion in vulnerable communities whilst layering preventive strategies through effective engagement of young aspiring leaders and youth volunteers who will be pioneering the effort.

Theory of change

If young people with leadership aspirations are equipped with knowledge and skills to collaborate and advocate with state and non-state actors to improve social cohesion using a ‘settings approach’ **And** the state and non-state actors are strengthened to enhance the platforms for youth voices and advocacies in terms of social cohesion **Then** they will be able to build trust on the existing institutional mechanisms embodying a healthy, resilient and cohesive community.

Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders of the project are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Roles and Responsibilities of key stakeholders

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
World Health Organization (WHO)	<p>Lead Agency and Implementing Partner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Project management and coordination • Providing technical guidance on the Healthy Settings Approach and public health aspects. • Contributing to developing health-related modules and ensuring alignment with global best practices. • Managing Financial Expenditure and budgets allocated to WHO • Managing the relationship with NYSC.
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	<p>Implementing Partner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Project management and coordination • Providing Expertise in peacebuilding, social cohesion, governance, and community development. • Working with CSOs and providing guidance on project implementation. • Managing budgets and authorising expenditure of UNDP and UNV • Participating in the project's monitoring and evaluation activities, contributing to the development of the results framework and the assessment of project outcomes.
United Nations Volunteers (UNV)	<p>Implementing Partner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint project management and coordination

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting and management a team of provincial coordinators (UN Volunteers) responsible for supporting participants in their respective provinces. • Providing logistical support for training programs and community projects, including transportation, accommodation, and coordination with local stakeholders and CSOs. • Supporting community engagement activities and coordination with local stakeholders. • Participating in monitoring activities, providing on-the-ground insights and feedback on project progress through provincial coordinators.
National Youth Services Council (NYSC)	<p>Government Implementing Partner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for aligning the project with national priorities and policies related to youth development. • Providing training facilities, logistical support, and access to youth networks, including the Youth Parliament and the Federation of Youth Clubs. • Approving project plans and activities from the perspective of the government. • Participating in the Training of Trainers (ToT) program to enhance NYSC capacity to deliver the YCLI training in the future. • Facilitating the integration of project outputs into existing NYSC programs that focus on strengthening youth leadership development.
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	<p>Engagement Partners – CNAs and CAPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting youth participant community engagements, including CNAs and CAP implementation. • Providing logistical assistance, facilitating communication with local stakeholders, and managing financial disbursements for CNAs and CAPs. • Facilitating the selection of youth participants from their network.
Service Providers (e.g. Curve Up)	<p>Engagement Partners - Contracted to support Project Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating the development and delivery of training modules and related resources (Including LMS, Digitising modules) • Recruiting resource persons, managing logistics, and producing, (where relevant printing and digitising) training materials.
Resource Persons	<p>Engagement Partners - Trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and delivering training modules based on their expertise. • Providing guidance and mentorship to participants.
Youth Parliamentarians	<p>Beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in training programs and applying learnings in their roles as youth representatives. • Conducting CNAs, developing and implementing CAPs, and engaging in community development initiatives. • Advocating for youth-related issues and promoting social cohesion within the youth parliament.
Other Youth Participants	<p>Beneficiaries</p>

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in training programs and applying learnings in their communities. • Conducting CNAs, developing and implementing CAPs, and engaging in community development initiatives.
Community Members	<p>Beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in community needs assessments and providing input and support on CAP related project activities. • Benefiting from the implemented community projects.

03 Evaluation scope and objectives

The evaluation serves the purpose of offering the consortium and the donor an appraisal of the project, including its design, implementation, and outcomes. Its **objective** is to assess the project's relevance, achievement of objectives, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, projected impact, sustainability, and consideration of gender and inclusion, compared to the original project proposal.

By providing evidence-based, credible, and valuable information, the evaluation aims to facilitate the integration of lessons learned, recommendations, and best practices into future decision-making processes. This will enable necessary corrections and improvements for future projects and allow the application of effective strategies in similar integrated programs and projects implemented elsewhere.

As such, the intended **purposes of the evaluation** are to:

1. Assess the progress made in achieving the expected results.
2. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of progress made towards impact, sustainability management and monitoring outlooks of the project.

Analyse how cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women and youth volunteering principles have been integrated into the implementation.

04 Evaluation approach and methods

The approach of the evaluation was aimed to comprehensively assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability of, inclusion of gender equality and human rights considerations into the project components, and Project Management and Monitoring of the "Youth Participation and Engagement for a Healthier, Equitable, Safer, and United Sri Lanka" project. Based on the outcome of the evaluation, it provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the project's impact across its diverse objectives. The final evaluation was an impartial, transparent, and participatory process involving relevant stakeholders and partners. The overall evaluation design is non-experimental and rely on both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods such as descriptive and inferential analyses, and thematic or narrative analysis aligned with the objectives of this evaluation. Following are summarised descriptions of the methodological approach, data collection and sampling, data analysis, data triangulation, and limitations.-The following table (Table 2) summarised the data collection and sampling for the evaluation.

Table 2. Data Collection and Sampling

Data Collection method	Description
Secondary Data Collection	Summary: 70 Documents
Desk Review	The evaluator examined nearly 70 project documents (with approximately 30 documents being related to module design) such as the main Project Document (Pro Doc), log frames, and project monitoring progress reports; budget documents; knowledge product of the project; agendas and minutes of meetings; and any other available documents deemed necessary for this Evaluation.
Primary Data Collection	Summary: 142 surveys, 06 FGDs, 17 Interviews (16 KIIs and 1 IDIs)
Youth participant perception survey The objective of this exercise was to evaluate how the participants described and classified their experience of being involved with this project as well as participant drop outs	The survey consisted of 39 participants who attended the First training & 103 participants who attended both the 1 st and 2 nd residential training programs. (total of 142) The provided dataset consisted mostly of students who participated in both the 1st and the 2 nd training programs. Participant feedback was primarily gathered through a perception survey.
Focus Group Discussions (FGD): Community respondents (Planned - 07) Members of communities which benefited from projects (executed Community Action Plans - CAPs) implemented by youth leaders, to gain their insights into the impact of the specific project and their experiences during project implementation.	06 FGDs have been Conducted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bentoda FGD (Community Arena Project) ● Baticaloa FGD (Culture Café project) ● Doragala FGD (Aswenna) ● Galaboda FGD (The Sustainable Development of the Village of Galaboda) ● Radawadunna FGD (E-Cane) ● Tissamaharama FGD (Water for Siyanethu Village) <p>It was not possible to complete one FGD (the 7th) due to adverse weather conditions and time constraints.</p>
In-depth Interviews youth participants who attended both training sessions (planned: 10) To understand their experiences, challenges, and lessons learnt.	01 Participant(s) interviewed (IDI) Participant data was primarily collected via the survey. Most participants who participated in the community project did not provide an interview, indicating personal demands on their time, such as exams, studies, or other commitments.
Key Informant Interviews: Representatives of implementing agencies (WHO/ UNDP/ UNV/ NYSC) Staff members who were directly involved in implementing the project to gather their insights, and experiences.	Conducted 05 Interviews (KIIs). Project implementers and a technical validation specialist representing the key implementing organizations were interviewed- WHO (02 interviews), UNDP (01), UNV (01) and NYSE (01)

Data Collection method	Description
Key Informant Interviews: CSO partners (Sarvodaya and Seva Lanka) to gather their insights, experiences with the donors and the youth leaders	2 KIIs Conducted (One from each CSO) This included Staff members of CSO partners who were directly involved in implementing project activities.
Key Informant Interviews: Expert service providers such as module developers and trainers Resource persons from a variety of backgrounds such as external individual experts, institutional service providers, and in-house resource persons, as well a key service provider	05 Key informant Interviews (KIIs) of trainers have been conducted. 01 interview with a key service provider (CurveUp) was conducted.
Key Informant Interviews: Provincial youth coordinators (Planned - 03)	03 interviews Conducted with provincial youth coordinators Provincial youth coordinators were selected in consultation with the implementers taking into consideration different levels of engagement, initiative, and enthusiasm displayed during their tenure.

A partial list of direct beneficiaries was made available to the Evaluation team by WHO/UNDP at the outset of the Evaluation.

The proposed segmentation of respondents and sample sizes take into consideration the nature of the project, the nature and number of beneficiaries, the methodological approach, the timeframe and resources available for the evaluation, and the approximate point of data saturation.

The following table (Table 3) illustrates the locations of the community projects

Table 3. Community Project Locations

Project Name	Project Locations	Province
Akurata Sawiyak	Dhothal Oya	Sabaragamuwa Province
Water for Siyanethu Village	Tissamaharamaya	Southern Province
Community Arena	Bentota	Southern Province
The Sustainable Development of the Village of Galaboda	Galaboda Village	Central Province
Aswenna	Doragala Village	Central Province
E-Cane	Radawadunna Village	Western Province

Project Name	Project Locations	Province
Culture Cafe	Gomarankadawala, Nainakadu, Pollebedda, Kunjamkulam/Viharai and Mavilankanthurai,	Eastern province

05 Evaluation criteria and questions

The TOR requires the evaluators to assess the project’s peacebuilding impacts, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and contributions toward gender equality objectives. Accordingly, the evaluators identified the following elements under 8 key areas² for evaluation: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, contributions towards gender equality & human rights, and project management & monitoring. The Evaluation Framework developed based on these core evaluation areas, which was used for this evaluation is attached as an Annex to this report (Annex 06. Evaluation Framework).

06 Risks and Limitations

While the chosen multi-faceted approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact, it is important to acknowledge some potential limitations: The targeted sample size in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews may limit the generalizability of findings. Social desirability bias and reliance on self-reported data could skew results. Researcher interpretation introduces potential bias in qualitative analysis. Time constraints might restrict data collection and analysis, and operational challenges such as outdated contact information and participants' unavailability or unwillingness to participate further complicate the process. Further:

- Organizing interviews (both in-depth interviews and quantitative surveys) with some stakeholders proved difficult, even though multiple attempts were made. Conducting in-depth interviews with youth participants proved particularly challenging, as many reduced their participation due to studies, exams, or other commitments.
- Coordinating the FGD for the Culture Cafe project that was executed in the Eastern Province was challenging due to the refusal of most beneficiaries to participate, citing their frustration over a certificate they were promised by the community project organizers (youth) not being provided to them. Ultimately, the FGD had to be conducted with only four community beneficiaries.
- Weather conditions affected the organization of the FGD at Dothalu Oya, which was planned to evaluate the “Akurata Saviyak” project. Persistent heavy rain significantly increased the

² This is in line with the **OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria**. The five **DAC** evaluation **criteria** are based on the conception that evaluation is an assessment “to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability” of efforts supported by aid agencies (**OECD**, p.9).

https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/seco_guidelines.pdf

risk of travel due to bad road conditions to the relevant location. Repairs, having started at the FGD location, which was a school building, further exacerbated the issue.

- Additionally, the evaluation team faced unexpected setbacks when some of the research staff fell ill with influenza-related illnesses, impacting the team's capacity to conduct interviews and process data.

Other Limitations:

- **Other Operational Data Collection Challenges:** The ability to complete the data collection process depends on the availability of contact information as well as the willingness of participants to contribute. Some of the challenges that we faced were:
 - Some of the contact numbers provided by the participants' database were incorrect or outdated. Some trainees were not available currently on the given contact numbers
 - Some trainees may have left the area or migrated for employment or other purposes
 - Some trainees may be too occupied, such as due to finding employment did not show interest in taking part in the survey
 - Some participants showed a lack of interest in taking part in the survey (causing difficulty in obtaining interview/survey appointments)

Impact on Findings: These limitations may have affected the generalizability of the findings to the entire project population. The results may provide rich insights into the experiences of a specific sample group but may not necessarily represent the broader population. Additionally, the limitations could influence the validity of the findings, particularly if social desirability bias or researcher interpretation sways the analysis.

07 Findings

This section presents the key findings of the evaluation, analysing the YCLI project across eight core dimensions: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, Gender Equality & Human Rights, and Project Management & Monitoring. The findings presented here offer a nuanced understanding of the project's strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness in achieving its intended objectives while providing valuable insights for strengthening future youth development and peacebuilding initiatives in Sri Lanka. Further,

- Annexes 01 to 04 showcase the questionnaires used in this study, while a list of interviewees is attached (Annex 05. List of Interviewees)
- The Evaluation Framework is shown in Annex 06
- Summary evaluation reports of 6 CAPs based on the conducted FGDs with beneficiaries are attached to this report as Annex 08.
- A mini case study is attached as Annex 09,
- Additional Charts that show participant feedback on several metrics are attached in Annex 10.
- Youth participant feedback based on qualitative questions of the survey that relate to suggestions for future project improvements and their own peacebuilding activities post-YCLI is attached as Annex 11.

Relevance

This section delves into the relevance of the YCLI project, examining whether its objectives, theory of change (TOC), intervention strategies, and chosen partners aligned with the needs and priorities of young leaders in Sri Lanka during the project's implementation period (2021-2023). This assessment considers the project's response to the prevailing socio-political context, the suitability of the Healthy Settings Approach, the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement, and the appropriateness of the selection processes for both implementing partners and youth participants.

Addressing a Critical Need for Youth Engagement and Peacebuilding in a Complex Context

The evaluation revealed a clear consensus among stakeholders that the YCLI project addressed a pressing need to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion, and youth leadership development in Sri Lanka. The project's timeframe (2021-2023) coincided with a particularly challenging period in the country's history, marked by the enduring impact of the Easter Sunday Attacks, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a deepening economic crisis, and the unprecedented Aragalaya protests. These events exacerbated existing social divisions, heightened inter-communal tensions, and created a sense of disillusionment and uncertainty among young people.

Within this volatile context, the project's focus on equipping young people with skills for collaboration, conflict resolution, and community engagement was deemed highly relevant by multiple stakeholders. Interviews with Resource Persons, Project Leads, and CSO representatives consistently highlighted the project's timeliness and its potential to address a crucial gap in youth development initiatives. As one resource person emphasized, *"This was a good opportunity for them.. to explore social issues."*

Further, 97% of youth participants surveyed expressed that they were satisfied with the first training program and 95% with both programs. This high satisfaction rate suggests that the training content and activities were perceived as relevant and beneficial by the majority of participants, supporting the conclusion that the project addressed a genuine need for youth leadership development.

The project recognized the significant role young people play in shaping civic spaces and contributing to sustainable peacebuilding. Several interviewees, drawing upon their experiences with previous peacebuilding initiatives, underscored the need to engage youth in a more meaningful and impactful way, particularly after witnessing the divisive rhetoric and violence that emerged in the aftermath of events like the Easter Sunday bombings and the Digana riots. One UN project lead expressed this concern, stating that *"young people are not listening to anybody... they just wanted to fight."* This highlights the need for targeted interventions that address the root causes of youth disengagement, build their capacity for constructive dialogue, and empower them to become agents of positive change within their communities.

Connection to National priorities, the UN Country Framework, and the RUNOs programme strategies and priorities

The YCLI project's relevance extends beyond addressing the immediate needs of Sri Lankan youth. The project design intentionally aligns with national priorities, the UN Country Framework, and the programmatic strategies of the participating UN agencies (RUNOs), ensuring its contribution to broader development goals and enhancing its potential for sustainable impact.

National Priorities and Policy Frameworks: The project directly supports the Sri Lankan government's "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour" policy framework. This national policy emphasizes enhancing the potential of young people and increasing their participation in political decision-making. The YCLI project aligns with these goals by equipping young leaders with the skills and knowledge to engage in civic and political processes, fostering collaboration between youth and state actors, and promoting a holistic approach to health and well-being. Furthermore, the project complements the government's National Youth Policy and the Ministry of Health's National Strategic Plan on Adolescent and Youth Health. The YCLI project's focus on capacity building, volunteerism, and addressing the needs of marginalized youth reinforces the National Youth Policy's objectives, while the project's "Healthy Settings Approach" aligns with the Ministry of Health's strategic plan, which promotes multi-sectoral interventions and community action for youth empowerment and well-being.

UN Country Framework and Sustainable Development Goals: Beyond national priorities, the YCLI project aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Sri Lanka and contributes directly to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project's focus on empowering youth, promoting social cohesion, and building a more peaceful and resilient society supports the UNSDCF's overarching goals of sustainable peace and development. Specifically, the project's activities contribute to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by addressing health risks and promoting healthy lifestyles, and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by fostering peaceful societies, providing access to justice, and ensuring responsive and inclusive decision-making processes.

RUNOs' Programmatic Strategies and Priorities: The YCLI project exemplifies a synergistic partnership between UN agencies, maximizing the strengths of each partner to achieve shared objectives. WHO's expertise in health, particularly its "Healthy Settings Approach," forms a core element of the project. UNDP contributes its experience in peacebuilding, governance, and sustainable development, leveraging its strong relationships with CSOs and government stakeholders. UNV strengthens the project by mobilizing its vast network of volunteers and focusing on community engagement, promoting its mandate of volunteerism as a powerful force for peace and development. By strategically aligning with national priorities, the UN Country Framework, and the programmatic strategies of the implementing agencies, the YCLI project maximized its relevance and created a unified and impactful approach to youth empowerment and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka.

The Relevance of the Healthy Settings Framework

The YCLI project adopted a unique and innovative approach by integrating the Healthy Settings framework into its peacebuilding efforts. The Healthy Settings Approach, developed by WHO, emphasizes creating environments that are conducive to both physical and mental well-being. This holistic approach recognizes the interconnectedness of various factors, including social, economic, and environmental determinants, that influence individual and community health.

The project team strategically chose this approach as a neutral bridging space to unite diverse stakeholders around a common goal. Recognizing that peacebuilding initiatives can often be sensitive and politicized, leading to resistance or scepticism from certain groups, the project team sought a framework that could transcend political divisions and appeal to a wider audience. By framing the project within the context of health and well-being, they aimed to create a more

inclusive and less contentious platform for engaging youth from different backgrounds and fostering a shared sense of purpose.

The Healthy Settings Approach provided a comprehensive lens for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by young people in Sri Lanka. It allowed the project to incorporate a diverse range of topics into its training program, including conflict resolution, leadership development, gender equality, mental health, environmental sustainability, and economic empowerment. This holistic approach recognized that achieving sustainable peace requires not only addressing the immediate symptoms of conflict but also tackling the underlying social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to instability and inequality.

Alignment of project activities with the strategic goals outlined in the ToC (Theory of Change)

The project's Theory of Change is as follows: If Young people with leadership aspirations are equipped with the knowledge and skills to collaborate and advocate with state and non-state actors to improve social cohesion using a 'settings approach,' AND the state and non-state actors are strengthened to enhance the platforms for youth voices and advocacies in terms of social cohesion, THEN: They will be able to build trust in existing institutional mechanisms embodying a healthy, resilient, and cohesive community.

Dissecting the Theory of Change:

- **Target Beneficiaries**
The TOC clearly identifies "*young people with leadership aspirations*" as the primary target beneficiaries. This encompasses a diverse group of youth, including those already in leadership positions, such as youth parliamentarians and those aspiring to become leaders within their communities.
- **Capacity Building**
The TOC emphasizes the importance of equipping these young people with the "*knowledge and skills*" necessary for effective collaboration and advocacy. This recognizes that simply providing opportunities for participation is insufficient; youth need to be empowered with the tools and strategies to engage meaningfully and influence decision-making processes.
- **Collaborative Approach**
The TOC highlights the need for collaboration between youth and both state and non-state actors, acknowledging the importance of a "*whole of society*" approach to promoting social cohesion. This recognizes that sustainable peacebuilding requires a multi-stakeholder effort involving not only government institutions but also civil society organizations, community groups, and other relevant actors.
- **Healthy Settings Approach**
The TOC explicitly mentions the use of a "*settings approach*" to improve social cohesion. This framework, developed by WHO, emphasizes the interconnectedness of various factors, including environmental, organizational, and personal factors, that influence health and well-being.
- **Strengthening Institutional Platforms**
The TOC recognizes that empowering youth is not enough; the institutions and platforms that facilitate their engagement also need to be strengthened. This involves enhancing the capacity of state and non-state actors to provide opportunities for youth voices to be heard, to participate in decision-making, and to advocate for their needs and aspirations.

The project activities were strategically designed to align with its Theory of Change, emphasizing collaboration, skills development, and community engagement as pathways to fostering a more cohesive and resilient society. The project's training modules were developed in line with the ToC, covering themes such as collective leadership, sustainable development goals, and conflict sensitivity. The training programs employed interactive methods, including outward-bound activities, digital tools, and group work, to effectively engage participants and enhance their understanding of the concepts.

The project's emphasis on community engagement through CNAs and CAPs further reinforced its alignment with its ToC goals. Participants were encouraged to apply their learning in practical settings, working with local communities to identify needs, develop solutions, and implement projects. This hands-on approach aimed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, empowering participants to become agents of change within their communities.

Aligning with Global Best Practices and Local Knowledge to Build on Experience

The YCLI project's relevance was further strengthened by its grounding in established global best practices and its foundation on prior successful initiatives in Sri Lanka. The "Health as a Navigator for Peace" approach, which links health considerations to peacebuilding, aligns with WHO's Global Health for Peace Initiative and builds upon the learnings from a previous successful project in Sri Lanka called "Health as a Bridge for Peace." One stakeholder elaborated on this connection, stating: *"The project didn't start from scratch but leveraged the learnings and successes of a previous initiative in Sri Lanka called 'Health as a Bridge for Peace'. This earlier project, piloted in the North and East provinces in the early 2000s, yielded promising results, providing a strong foundation for the current project's approach."*

This conscious effort to build upon existing knowledge and experience, both global and local, enhanced the project's contextual relevance and increased its likelihood of success. By incorporating lessons learned from previous initiatives, the project team was able to anticipate potential challenges, adapt their strategies, and refine their interventions to be more effective in addressing the specific needs and priorities of youth in Sri Lanka.

Engaging Stakeholders from Design to Implementation

The YCLI project demonstrated its commitment to stakeholder engagement throughout its lifecycle, recognizing the importance of involving key actors in the design, implementation, and evaluation of its activities. The project team conducted consultations with government officials, youth groups, and community representatives, ensuring that the project's objectives and strategies were aligned with the needs and priorities of its intended beneficiaries.

The project's collaborative framework, involving WHO, UNDP, UNV, and NYSC, further strengthened its stakeholder engagement. Each organization brought its unique expertise and networks to the table, fostering a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to youth development and peacebuilding. However, the evaluation also revealed that the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement varied across different project phases and partners.

Targeting Youth Parliamentarians: A Strategic Choice with Limitations

The project's decision to target youth parliamentarians as a key beneficiary group was based on their potential to influence policy, represent youth voices, and become future leaders in Sri Lanka. The youth parliament, established in 2010, provided a platform for politically aspiring young people to engage in national-level dialogues, participate in parliamentary processes, and advocate for issues affecting youth. The project team recognized the significance of engaging these individuals, aiming to enhance their capacity for effective leadership, promote a more inclusive and representative youth parliament, and foster a sense of trust in institutional mechanisms.

However, the evaluation revealed that the project's approach to engaging youth parliamentarians had both strengths and limitations.

Strengths:

- **Direct Access to Emerging Political Leaders**
Targeting youth parliamentarians provided a direct pathway to engaging with young people who had already demonstrated leadership potential and a commitment to public service.
- **Platform for Influencing Policy**
By equipping youth parliamentarians with the knowledge and skills to advocate for policy changes, the project aimed to create a more enabling environment for youth participation and promote the integration of peacebuilding and social cohesion into national policies.
- **Potential for Long-Term Impact**
The project's focus on youth parliamentarians had the potential to create a ripple effect, as these individuals could become influential leaders in their communities and the broader political landscape, shaping policies and advocating for youth interests long after the project's completion.

Limitations:

- **Low Female Representation**
The project faced challenges in attracting a significant number of female youth parliamentarians, reflecting the broader gender imbalance in political representation in Sri Lanka. This highlights the need for targeted interventions to address the barriers women face in accessing and succeeding in political leadership roles.
- **Varying Levels of Engagement**
While some enthusiastically participated in the project and demonstrated a genuine commitment to community engagement, others viewed it as a mere formality or an opportunity for personal gain, raising concerns about the selection process's effectiveness in identifying truly motivated individuals.

Balancing Inclusivity and Commitment in Participant Selection:

The project adopted a two-pronged approach to participant selection. All youth parliamentarians were directly invited to participate, while an open call for applications was publicized to recruit a wider range of youth actively involved in community work. This strategy aimed to:

- **Engage Existing Youth Leadership Structures:** By including all youth parliamentarians, the project recognized the importance of working within existing institutional frameworks and leveraging the potential of elected youth representatives.

- **Promote Inclusivity and Diversity:** The open call for applications aimed to recruit youth from various backgrounds and affiliations, including those associated with NYSC's youth societies (Taruna Samaja), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), universities, and informal youth groups working at the grassroots level. This ensured a more diverse participant pool, enriching the learning experience and fostering collaboration among young people with varying levels of experience and access to resources.

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

The participant selection process, while strategically sound, encountered challenges during implementation. A significant number of youth parliamentarians declined the invitation to participate, and many applicants who were initially shortlisted subsequently dropped out due to various reasons, including:

- **Competing Priorities:** Many youths, particularly those enrolled in universities or holding jobs, struggled to balance their existing commitments with the project's demanding 7-day residential training schedule.
- **Limited Assessment of Motivation and Availability:** The selection process did not adequately assess candidates' genuine interest in community development, their understanding of the project's objectives, or their commitment to actively participating in all project phases.

These challenges highlight the need for a more robust and nuanced approach to participant selection in future initiatives.

Coherence

This section analyses the coherence of the YCLI project, focusing on the collaborative dynamics and interlinkages between implementing partners. It examines how effectively the project leveraged existing synergies with other initiatives and harnessed the unique strengths and expertise of each partner to create a unified and impactful approach to promoting youth leadership and social cohesion in Sri Lanka.

A Collaborative Framework for Synergy and Impact

The YCLI project adopted a consortium model with joint outcomes, pooled funding, and a shared commitment to achieving its objectives. This collaborative framework, involving WHO, UNDP, UNV, and NYSC, differed significantly from traditional siloed approaches to UN project implementation, where agencies often work independently with separate outcomes and budgets.

Strengths of the Consortium Model:

- **Shared Ownership and Accountability**
By pooling resources and sharing responsibility for all deliverables, the project fostered a greater sense of ownership and accountability among partner agencies, encouraging them to work collaboratively towards common goals.
- **Leveraging Expertise and Networks**
Each partner organization brought unique strengths and expertise to the project, enabling a more comprehensive and impactful approach. WHO provided technical guidance on health and the Healthy Settings Approach, UNDP contributed expertise in peacebuilding,

governance, and working with CSOs, and UNV spearheaded volunteer management and community engagement.

- **Enhanced Coordination and Communication**

The project established regular coordination meetings, involving representatives from implementing partners and the project team, which facilitated communication, problem-solving, and progress tracking.

Fostering existing synergies and interlinkages with other initiatives

The project's collaborative framework, involving WHO, UNDP, UNV, and NYSC, demonstrates a deliberate effort to foster synergies and leverage the comparative advantages of each partner. The project design aimed to promote a more integrated and holistic approach to youth empowerment, contrasting with previous PBF projects where UN agencies often worked more independently with separate outcomes. One project lead emphasized this shift, stating, *"This time around none of the outcomes or outputs were taken under only one organization ... We made sure that each and every agency took part actively in all the outcomes and outputs."*

The YCLI project successfully identified potential synergies with existing peacebuilding and development initiatives undertaken by the partner UN agencies, highlighting a strategic vision for integrated programming. The project proposal explicitly recognizes the importance of building upon previous and ongoing efforts to avoid duplication and maximize impact.

Several examples of potential synergy are outlined in the project documentation are as follows:

- **Complementarity with Existing UNDP Projects**

Firstly, the project seeks to bolster UNDP's EU-funded regional Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) project, which focuses on preventing violent extremism by promoting tolerance and respect for diversity. While the PVE project emphasizes awareness-raising and community engagement, YCLI strengthens this effort by equipping young people with leadership skills and providing a platform for them to advocate for policies that combat hate speech and promote social cohesion. Secondly, the YCLI project complements UNDP's Capacity Development of Local Government (CDLG) project, which works to strengthen local authorities in conflict-affected regions. By building youth capacity for engagement with local government, the YCLI project fosters a vital link between young leaders and decision-making processes at the grassroots level. Furthermore, the project's emphasis on promoting healthy settings within communities aligns with the CDLG project's focus on sustainable development and establishing green cities. Lastly, the YCLI project seeks to build upon the achievements of the UNDP's PBF-PRF reconciliation project, which focuses on providing psychosocial support to conflict-affected communities. While the PBF-PRF project emphasizes healing and individual well-being, YCLI complements this by empowering youth to address the root causes of conflict and advocate for systemic changes that promote a more just and peaceful society. By connecting youth leaders to the state system for political participation and policy development, the YCLI project strengthens the focus on long-term, systemic solutions.

- **Building on WHO's Experience**

The project documentation acknowledges WHO's ongoing work on healthy settings initiatives in three districts and recognizes the need for increased youth involvement. The

YCLI project aimed to address this gap by empowering young leaders to become active participants in creating healthy communities, utilizing WHO's expertise in this area.

- **Strengthening UNV's Volunteer Engagement**

The project sought to build upon UNV's experience in promoting volunteerism, particularly through their involvement in the Youth and Gender Promotion Initiative and the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) coalition. By engaging youth volunteers in community needs assessments and action plans, the YCLI project intended to expand the reach and impact of these initiatives.

Challenges in Maintaining Consistent Coherence:

While the collaborative framework was strategically sound, the evaluation revealed challenges in maintaining consistent coherence throughout the project's implementation.

- **Communication Challenges and Unclear Roles:** The service provider, Curve Up, responsible for coordinating training module development and logistics, encountered significant difficulties navigating the complexities of the multi-partner environment. They experienced delays, conflicting feedback, and a lack of clarity regarding decision-making hierarchy and authority levels, highlighting the need for a more clearly defined project coordination approach or framework and streamlined inter-partner communications framework.
- **Inconsistent NYSC Engagement:** Despite being a key implementing partner, NYSC's active participation was inconsistent. This was attributed to mainly factors such as frequent leadership transitions within the organization, and limited technical capacity.
- **Uneven Collaboration with CSOs:** While CSOs played a vital role in supporting community engagement, their involvement in the training design and delivery was limited. Some CSO representatives expressed a desire for greater participation in these earlier stages, suggesting a missed opportunity to fully leverage their expertise and foster stronger connections with youth participants.

The Role of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The project established a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprised of members from the UN agencies, NYSC and other stakeholders to provide technical guidance, review project proposals, and offer strategic advice. The TAG played a valuable role in the initial stages, particularly in shaping the design of training modules and evaluating community project proposals.

However, the TAG's engagement and influence appear to get diminished as the project progressed, especially during the implementation of community projects.

Opportunities for Collaboration and Integration to Capitalize on Synergies

The evaluation highlighted several opportunities for fostering stronger synergies and interlinkages with other initiatives:

- **Leveraging CSO Expertise**
CSOs, with their extensive experience in community development and their established networks, could have been more meaningfully involved in the training design and delivery, potentially enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the modules.

- **Integrating with Existing Programs**

The project's training modules, digital resources, and the Healthy Settings Approach could be integrated into existing youth development programs implemented by NYSC, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and other relevant organizations, promoting long-term sustainability and expanding the project's impact.

- **Connecting with Other Peacebuilding Initiatives**

The project could have explored collaborations and knowledge sharing with other organizations working on peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Sri Lanka, such as those involved in the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Coalition, to leverage existing resources and expertise.

Effectiveness

This section analyses the effectiveness of the YCLI project in achieving its intended outcomes and outputs, focusing on the impact of its interventions on youth participants and the communities they engaged with. It examines the project's success in reaching its target groups, the influence of gender-specific factors, the extent to which planned results were achieved, and the project's ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges and changing circumstances.

Training Program: A Cornerstone of Success

The YCLI project's two-phase residential training program emerged as a significant strength, effectively delivering its content and receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. The program, designed to equip young leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote social cohesion and community development, covered a wide range of topics, including leadership, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, community engagement, gender equality, and the Healthy Settings Approach.

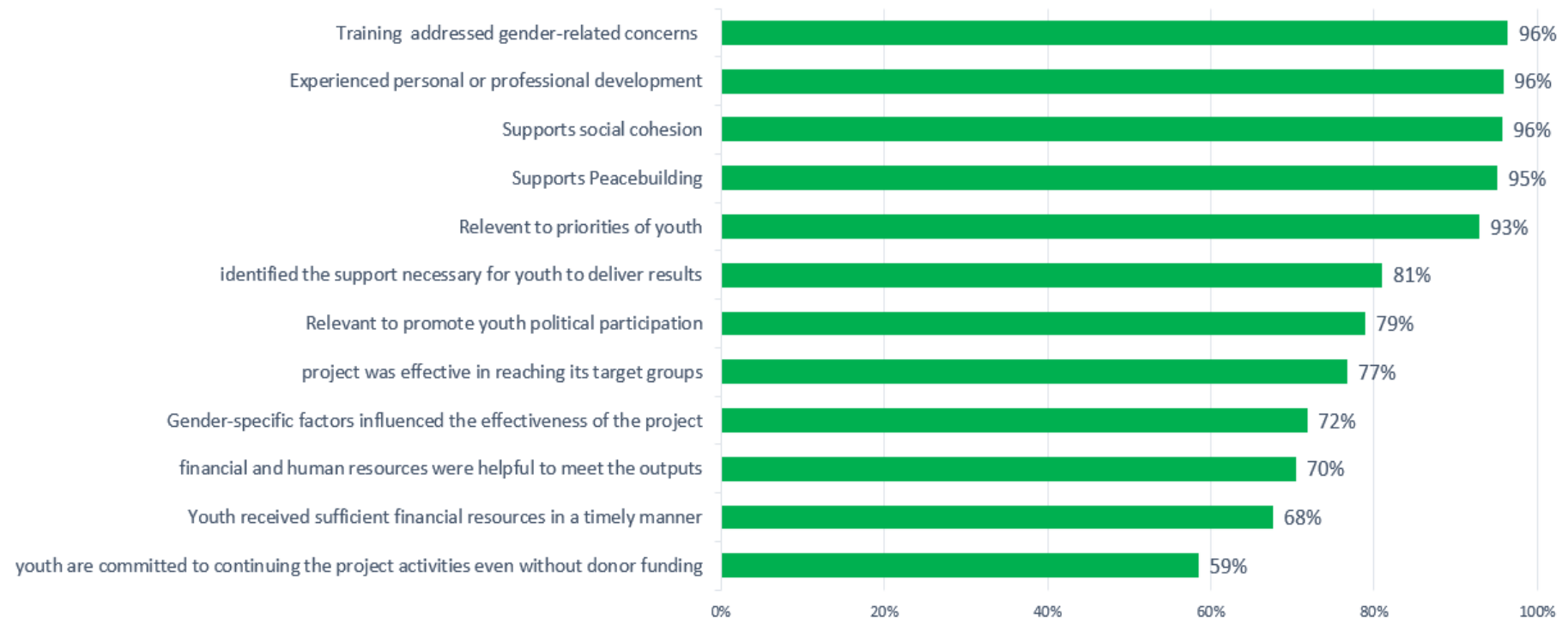
73% of the surveyed youth agreed that the project was effective in reaching its target groups, including marginalized and under-represented groups (People with low incomes, LGBTQ+, Indigenous people). 18% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 8% disagreed. This supports the finding that the project achieved a significant reach among its target audience, but also acknowledges that a considerable portion (nearly 26%) either disagreed or remained neutral, highlighting potential areas for improvement in terms of inclusivity.

The training modules of the 1st training program received high satisfaction ratings from the surveyed youth participants, with 79% of participants expressing 'very satisfied'. Similarly, 74% of participants were 'very satisfied' with the training modules of both programs, indicating a high level of overall satisfaction. Figure 1 summarises multiple participant responses.

Overall Project Ratings by youth Participants

Survey responses about the project from youth participants (youth participant responses combining of ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ responses for the perception survey Q 3.12)

Figure 1. Performance ratios based on youth feedback



For example, 96% of surveyed participants have agreed or strongly agreed that the “Training addressed gender-related concerns”.

Key factors contributing to the training program's effectiveness:

- **Interactive and Participatory Methodology**
The training program employed a diverse array of interactive and participatory methods, including group discussions, case studies, role-playing activities, outdoor exercises, and presentations, creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment.
- **Experienced and Engaging Resource Persons**
The project team carefully selected resource persons based on their expertise, experience working with youth, and ability to deliver content in a clear and relatable manner. Participants consistently praised the quality of instruction and the insights shared by the trainers. Further, 95% of surveyed youth participants affirmed that the program effectively supported peacebuilding efforts, while 97% agreed that it successfully fostered social cohesion between different communities.
- **Comprehensive Curriculum**
The 20 training modules covered a wide range of topics relevant to youth leadership and peacebuilding, providing participants with a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing their communities and equipping them with practical tools and approaches.
- **Focus on Practical Application**
The training program emphasized the practical application of theoretical concepts, providing participants with opportunities to practice their skills through simulations, case studies, and group projects. This hands-on approach facilitated the transfer of learning to real-world settings.
However, 21% of the participants surveyed, that only attended for the first training program and 13% of surveyed participants who attended for both programs, emphasised the importance of increasing the practical application of the training content in the training programs.
- **Positive and Supportive Learning Environment**
Participants consistently highlighted the positive and supportive atmosphere of the training program, where they felt comfortable sharing their experiences, expressing their views, and learning from each other. This fostered a sense of community and encouraged active participation and engagement.

Community Engagement: A Mixed Picture of Impact

The community engagement phase of the YCLI project, encompassing Community Needs Assessments (CNAs) and Community Action Plans (CAPs), aimed to provide participants with practical experience in applying their learning, fostering collaboration between youth and communities, and contributing to addressing local needs.

Community Needs Assessments (CNAs), A Valuable Learning Experience

The CNA phase was generally successful, with participants actively engaging in the process and demonstrating a willingness to learn from their communities. The CNAs facilitated a deeper understanding of local challenges, fostered connections between youth and community members, and provided a valuable foundation for developing relevant and impactful project proposals.

However, the CNA process also revealed some limitations:

- **Limited Scope and Depth**
Due to time constraints, other personal obligations and resource limitations, some participants were unable to conduct comprehensive CNAs, potentially overlooking important community needs or failing to fully grasp the complexities of local contexts.
- **Inconsistency in Support and Guidance**
The level of support provided to participants during the CNA phase varied depending on the province and the capacity of the provincial field coordinators. Some participants received more hands-on guidance and assistance than others, leading to discrepancies in the quality and depth of the assessments.

Translating Training into Action through Community Action Plans (CAPs)

The CAP implementation phase, while demonstrating the potential of youth-led initiatives to drive positive change, faced several challenges that hindered its overall effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The section on Impact describes positive aspects and challenges faced by CAPs.

Demonstrating Flexibility and Resilience by Adapting to a Challenging Context

The project's implementation period coincided with a series of unforeseen events that significantly impacted its activities and timelines. The COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis, and the Aragalaya protests presented unprecedented challenges, requiring the project team to demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, and resourcefulness in adjusting their strategies and implementation plans.

Key Adaptations:

- **Shifting to Online Training Delivery**
During the COVID-19 lockdowns, the project team provided online access to training modules for participants who had to be isolated due to COVID restrictions.
- **Adjusting Budgets and Procurement Processes**
To address the impact of the economic crisis, the project team renegotiated contracts and revised budgets, to accommodate rising costs and ensure the availability of resources.
- **Integrating Current Events into Training**
The Aragalaya protests were incorporated into the training curriculum, providing participants with a real-world context for applying their knowledge and skills in conflict resolution, communication, and advocacy. (Please See Annex 09. Mini Case Studies)
- **Providing Support to Participants Affected by the Crisis**
The project team provided additional support to participants facing personal hardships, and organized activities aimed at addressing the mental health and well-being of participants especially within the training phase of the project.

Despite these commendable efforts, the adaptations made to address these challenges also resulted in unintended consequences:

- **Increased Dropout Rate**
The extended project timeline, caused partly due to delays in obtaining approvals from NYSC as well as impact of COVID 19, potentially contributed to a higher dropout rate among

participants, particularly those with competing priorities like university exams or job commitments.

- **Compressed Implementation Timelines**

Delays in the initial phases of the project compressed the time available for community engagement and project implementation, potentially impacting the depth of participatory planning and the long-term sustainability of initiatives.

Efficiency

This section assesses the efficiency of the YCLI project, focusing on the strategic allocation and utilization of resources – financial, technical, and human – across its various activities. The evaluation examines whether adequate resources were available, accessed in a timely manner, and utilized effectively to achieve the project's intended outputs and outcomes. It further analyses the efficiency of project management processes, procurement procedures, and the utilization of human resources, identifying areas for improvement and recommending strategies to enhance cost-effectiveness in future initiatives.

Financial Resource Management: Navigating a Turbulent Economic Landscape

The YCLI project, with an overall budget of USD 1,499,998.66, received sufficient funding to support its planned activities. The project's budget allocation, as detailed in the project document, reflected a strategic approach to resource distribution, with funds allocated to training programs, community engagement initiatives, operational costs, and an independent external evaluation.

However, the project's implementation coincided with a period of significant economic turbulence in Sri Lanka, marked by a rapidly depreciating currency, high inflation, and resource scarcity. This volatile economic context presented considerable challenges for managing the project's budget effectively and ensuring the timely and efficient utilization of financial resources.

Challenges Encountered:

- **Delays in Procurement and Disbursements**

The project experienced delays in procuring goods and services necessitated due to rising costs and project demands, securing approvals for expenditures, and disbursing funds to implementing partners, service providers and beneficiaries. These delays, attributed in part to the complex bureaucratic procedures within UN agencies and the need for approvals from multiple stakeholders, were exacerbated by the economic crisis, which increased costs, and disrupted supply chains.

- **Budgetary Pressures and Cost Overruns**

The initial budget, developed before the full impact of the economic crisis was evident, proved to be insufficient for some project activities, particularly those related to community project implementation. The rising cost of materials and unforeseen expenses led to budget shortfalls, requiring the project team to reallocate funds within existing budget lines.

- **Inconsistent Travel Reimbursements**

The process for calculating and disbursing travel reimbursements to participants and project staff (such as provincial coordinators) was inconsistent, with some individuals reporting discrepancies between their actual expenses and the allocated funds. This can be

attributed to a lack of clearly communicated guidelines, inadequate consideration of individual circumstances, and communication gaps.

However, It is important to acknowledge that at least some of the inconsistencies in travel reimbursements could have arisen due to the complexities of calculating travel distances and the limitations imposed by government regulations as well. For instance, some participants may have applied for the program from their permanent residence district but travelled to the training program from a different location, perhaps due to studies or temporary work commitments. However, NYSC, being a government entity, is bound by specific circulars that dictate travel allowance payments can only be made based on the district indicated in the application, regardless of the participant's actual point of departure. This discrepancy between a participant's registered district and their actual travel origin could have resulted in inconsistencies in travel reimbursements, potentially leading to dissatisfaction among those who incurred higher travel expenses than what was reimbursed

Mitigating Challenges and Enhancing Efficiency:

Despite these challenges, the project team implemented several measures to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis and improve financial resource management:

- **Renegotiating Contracts**
The project team proactively renegotiated with vendors and service providers to secure service continuation.
- **Seeking No-Cost Extensions**
To address time constraints, the project team requested and received three no-cost extensions from the donor, extending the project's timeframe from 18 months to nearly three years. While, these extensions did not provide additional funding, there still persisted a compressed timeframe for project implementation potentially impacting the quality and sustainability of some activities such as CAPs.

Balancing Capacity and Efficiency through Technical and Human Resources

The YCLI project relied heavily on the expertise, skills, and commitment of its human resources, both paid staff and volunteers, to achieve its objectives. The project team, comprised of individuals from WHO, UNDP, UNV, and NYSC, brought a diverse range of experience and knowledge to the project, ensuring that its activities were informed by technical expertise, a deep understanding of the Sri Lankan context, and a commitment to promoting youth development and peacebuilding.

Leveraging Expertise and Minimizing Costs:

The project team strategically utilized human resources to maximize efficiency and minimize costs:

- **Reliance on National Expertise**
The project primarily employed national staff and consultants, minimizing reliance on more expensive international personnel and promoting local ownership of the project.
- **Engaging UN Volunteers**
The project recruited national UN Volunteers to support various project activities, including coordination, advocacy, operations, and community engagement. This not only provided valuable human resources but also aligned with the project's focus on promoting volunteerism as a pathway for youth engagement.

- **Leveraging CSO Expertise**

The project partnered with two experienced CSOs, Sarvodaya and Seva Lanka, to provide support for the community engagement phase. These organizations, with their established networks, local knowledge, and experience in community development, played a crucial role in facilitating the CNAs, supporting the development of CAPs, and overseeing the disbursement of funds to project teams.

Challenges in Human Resource Management

Despite these strategic approaches, the project encountered challenges related to human resource management:

- **Service Provider Capacity Constraints**

The service provider, Curve Up, tasked with supporting the development and delivery of training programs, lacked the necessary technical expertise and project management skills to effectively fulfil their role. This resulted in an overreliance on UN staff and resource persons, delays in module development, and dissatisfaction among some stakeholders such as resource persons.

- **Field Coordinator Workload and Support**

Provincial coordinators, recruited through UNV, played a crucial role in supporting participants during the community engagement phase, but they faced a heavy workload, limited resources, and insufficient training on participatory approaches to community development. This could have contributed to burnout and limited their ability to provide consistent and effective support to all participants.

- **Staff Turnover and Capacity Gaps**

The project experienced some staff turnover, particularly among provincial coordinators, potentially due to the demanding nature of the work and the challenges posed by the volatile socio-political context.

Enhancing Efficiency in Training Delivery

The project's two-phase residential training program, while successful in equipping participants with knowledge and skills, faced efficiency challenges related to its format, duration, and accessibility:

- **Centralized Training Model**

The reliance on a centralized training model, with all participants brought to a single location for a seven-day residential program, limited the project's flexibility in responding to individual needs and unforeseen circumstances. Participants from distant provinces faced significant travel costs and time commitments, while those with inflexible schedules, such as university students, struggled to attend the full program.

- **Lengthy Training Duration**

The seven-day duration of each training phase, while allowing for comprehensive coverage of the modules, contributed to participant fatigue and potentially hindered knowledge retention.

- **Language Barriers**

The use of Sinhala as the primary language of instruction, despite the provision of simultaneous interpretation, created challenges for some participants, particularly those

from Tamil-speaking communities, limiting their full participation and understanding of the content.

Balancing Ambition with Reality in Community Project Implementation

The project's community engagement phase, while showcasing the potential of youth-led initiatives to address local needs, faced efficiency challenges related to:

- **Limited Project Scope and Funding**
The project's limited budget for community projects restricted the number of initiatives that could be funded, forcing some teams to scale down their project scope. This, in turn, impacted the project's overall impact at the community level.
- **Compressed Timeframes for Implementation**
Delays in the initial phases of the project compressed the time available for community project implementation, potentially impacting the quality and sustainability of the initiatives.
- **Challenges with Contractor Management**
Some projects, particularly the "Hospital Renovation at Galaboda Village," experienced delays and cost overruns due to contractor mismanagement, highlighting the need for more rigorous contractor selection processes, clearer contracts, and stricter oversight mechanisms.

Promoting Value for Money: A Mixed Picture

The project demonstrated a commitment to ensuring value for money through its collaborative approach, its reliance on local expertise, and its efforts to negotiate favourable rates for services and materials. However, certain aspects of the project's implementation raised concerns about its overall cost-effectiveness:

- **Service Provider Challenges**
The selection of a service provider with limited capacity and experience resulted in delays, and dissatisfaction among some stakeholders. This highlights the importance of a more rigorous vetting process for selecting service providers and ensuring that they possess the necessary expertise and project management skills.
- **Questionable Expenditures**
The use of expensive amenities, such as luxury hotels during training programs was criticized by some participants, suggesting a need for more cost-conscious decision-making and a prioritization of community-level impact over unnecessary expenditures.

Impact

This section delves into the impact of the YCLI project, focusing on the tangible and intangible changes it facilitated in both the lives of its primary beneficiaries, the youth participants, and the communities they engaged with. It analyses the project's contribution to individual development, community empowerment, and broader social cohesion, while examining the extent to which these impacts are likely to endure beyond the project's lifespan.

A Transformative Journey Empowering Youth

The YCLI project demonstrably empowered youth participants, equipping them with valuable skills and knowledge, fostering a greater sense of agency, and promoting positive attitudinal shifts towards community engagement, volunteerism, and political participation. The project's comprehensive training program, coupled with its emphasis on practical application through CNAs and CAPs, provided a transformative learning experience that extended beyond the classroom and into the real-world contexts of their communities.

Key Impacts on Youth Participants:

- **Enhanced Knowledge and Skills**
Participants consistently reported significant gains in their knowledge and skills related to leadership, communication, conflict resolution, community engagement, and project management. The interactive and participatory nature of the training, coupled with the expertise of the resource persons, effectively facilitated the acquisition of new knowledge and the development of practical skills.
- **Increased Confidence and Self-Efficacy**
The project fostered a sense of confidence and self-efficacy among participants, empowering them to take on leadership roles, engage in community initiatives, and advocate for positive change. Many participants, particularly those from marginalized communities or with limited prior experience, reported feeling more empowered to speak up, share their ideas, and contribute to decision-making processes.
- **Positive Attitude Shifts**
The project facilitated a shift in participants' attitudes towards community engagement, volunteerism, and political participation. Many expressed a renewed sense of hope, a belief in their ability to make a difference, and a commitment to contributing to their communities.
- **Strengthened Inter-Ethnic Relationships**
The project's focus on bringing together youth from diverse backgrounds, including different ethnicities and religions, fostered a greater understanding and appreciation of diversity. Participants reported forming lasting friendships and collaborative relationships across social divides, contributing to a more inclusive and cohesive social fabric.

Tangible Benefits but Uncertain Sustainability for Communities

The YCLI project aimed to create a positive impact on communities by supporting youth-led initiatives that addressed local needs and promoted social cohesion. While the project achieved tangible benefits through the implementation of seven community projects, its overall impact at the community level was mixed, with some initiatives demonstrating greater success and sustainability than others.

Positive Impacts:

- **Addressing Community Needs**
The community projects successfully addressed a diverse range of community needs, including:
 - Improving access to clean water and sanitation: The "Water for Siyanethu Village" project in Tissamaharamaya effectively provided clean drinking water to a community with a significant population of visually impaired individuals.

- Enhancing educational infrastructure: The "Akurata Sawiyak" project in Dhothal Oya renovated a dilapidated school, providing a more conducive learning environment.
- Promoting interfaith harmony: The "Community Arena" project in Benthara, although facing initial challenges, successfully facilitated interfaith dialogue and collaboration.
- Strengthening community healthcare: The "Hospital Renovation at Galaboda Village" project, despite encountering setbacks, aimed to improve healthcare access for mothers and babies.
- **Fostering Community Ownership and Collaboration**
The project's emphasis on community engagement, through CNAs and CAPs, fostered a sense of ownership and collaboration between youth participants, local residents, and government officials.
- **Empowering Marginalized Communities**
Several projects focused on addressing the needs of marginalized communities, including those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and those in remote areas.

Challenges:

- **Limited Scope and Sustainability**
The project's limited budget and short timeframe for community project implementation restricted the scope and duration of many initiatives. The lack of ongoing funding and a dedicated support system for community projects raised concerns about their long-term sustainability.
- **Inadequate Planning and Preparation**
Some projects encountered difficulties due to inadequate planning, feasibility assessments, and community consultations. This resulted in projects that were not fully aligned with community needs or lacked the necessary resources and expertise.
- **Contractor Management Issues**
One community project faced setbacks due to contractor mismanagement and lack of oversight, highlighting the need for a more robust contractor selection process and stricter accountability mechanisms.
- **Uneven Impact Across Projects**
The effectiveness and impact of the community projects varied considerably, with some projects achieving more sustainable and transformative outcomes than others. This highlights the importance of thorough needs assessments, feasibility studies, community engagement and monitoring during the project planning, selection and implementation.

Capturing the Nuances of Impact: The Need for Long-Term Assessment

Assessing the full impact of the YCLI project, particularly its long-term effects on social cohesion, youth engagement, and community development, is a complex undertaking. While the evaluation gathered valuable insights into the project's immediate outcomes, the limited timeframe for follow-up and the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for community projects hindered a comprehensive assessment of its lasting impact.

Key Considerations for Future Impact Assessment:

- **Long-Term Follow-up**
Conducting follow-up assessments with participants and community members several months or even years after the project's completion can provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of the training program, the long-term viability of community projects, and the continued engagement of youth leaders in peacebuilding and development initiatives.
- **Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection**
Employing a mixed-methods approach to impact assessment, combining quantitative data on project outputs with qualitative data on changes in attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions, can provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the project's effects.
- **Participatory Evaluation**
Involving project beneficiaries, including youth participants and community members, in the evaluation process can provide valuable insights into their experiences, perspectives on the project's impact, and recommendations for improvement.

Sustainability

This section examines the sustainability of the YCLI project, assessing the extent to which its impact, capacities, knowledge, and relationships will endure beyond the project's official end date of July 2023. It analyses the commitment of national partners to continuing project activities, explores the mechanisms established to ensure sustained engagement, and identifies opportunities for integrating project outcomes into existing structures and programs.

Building Capacity for the Future

The YCLI project, through its comprehensive training program, community engagement activities, and strategic partnerships, successfully built a range of valuable capacities that can be leveraged for future initiatives aimed at youth development and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. These capacities represent a crucial foundation for ensuring the project's long-term impact and sustaining its contribution to a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Key Capacities Developed:

- **Empowered Youth Leaders**
The project's training program equipped 573 young people with valuable knowledge and skills in leadership, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, community engagement, and project management. Participants, representing diverse backgrounds, demonstrated increased confidence, a strengthened sense of agency, and a commitment to applying their learning in their communities.
- **Strengthened National Partner Capacity**
The project actively engaged with the National Youth Services Council (NYSC), providing training to their staff, developing a digital platform and Learning Management System (LMS), and sharing training materials and resources. This capacity building aimed to equip NYSC to continue delivering the YCLI program or integrate its modules into their existing programs, ensuring a sustainable pathway for youth leadership development.

- **Engaged Civil Society Partners**

The project's collaboration with Sarvodaya and Seva Lanka, two experienced CSOs with extensive grassroots networks, fostered valuable partnerships that could be leveraged for future initiatives. These organizations, with their expertise in community development and their commitment to youth empowerment, could provide ongoing support and mentorship to YCLI alumni and contribute to the sustainability of community projects.

- **Established Networks and Relationships**

The project facilitated the creation of a vibrant network of trained youth leaders from diverse backgrounds, connecting them with each other, with mentors, and with government stakeholders. These connections, if effectively maintained, can serve as a valuable platform for ongoing collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action on issues related to peacebuilding and development.

Challenges to Sustaining Capacity and Impact

While the project successfully built a range of valuable capacities, the evaluation revealed several challenges that could hinder their long-term sustainability and impact:

- **Uncertainty Regarding NYSC's Commitment and Capacity**

Despite expressing a willingness to integrate project outcomes into its programs, NYSC's commitment to fully utilizing the project's resources and delivering the training program in a sustained manner remains unclear. The organization faced challenges with technical infrastructure, particularly in hosting the LMS, and lacked a concrete implementation plan and dedicated budget for continuing project activities. However, the NYSC has mentioned that it is working towards integrating the YCLI digital training material into their own training modules.

- **Limited Funding for Community Projects**

The absence of a clear funding mechanism for supporting the continuation of community projects beyond the initial seed grant funding poses a significant threat to their long-term sustainability. Many participants expressed a desire to continue their initiatives but lacked the resources to do so.

- **Absence of a Dedicated Support Structure**

The lack of a dedicated organization or framework to oversee project activities, maintain the network of trained youth leaders, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize resources for sustained youth engagement in peacebuilding and development hinders the project's ability to generate a lasting impact.

Gender Equality and Human Rights

This section examines the extent to which the YCLI project addressed gender equality and human rights considerations throughout its design and implementation. It analyses the project's efforts to include marginalized groups, promote the participation of women, address harmful gender norms, and create a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.

A Multi-Faceted Approach to Promoting Gender Equality

The YCLI project demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity from its inception. Recognizing the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in Sri Lanka, particularly in the political sphere, the project team implemented a multi-faceted strategy to

address gender imbalances and foster a more equitable and empowering environment for female participants.

Key Strategies and Achievements

- **Targeted Recruitment**

The project team actively sought applications from young women through various channels, including partnerships with women's organizations, universities, and youth networks. They also implemented a quota system for female participation, aiming for a near 50/50 gender balance in the training programs.
- **Dedicated Gender Equality Training**

A comprehensive and interactive full day module on gender equity and empowerment was incorporated into the training program which encouraged open discussions and challenging traditional norms. 78% of the surveyed participants rated Gender Equity and Empowerment as the number one training module. This indicates that the project's efforts to address gender-related concerns were well-received by participants. Further, 96% of surveyed youth participants agreed that the training effectively addressed gender-related concerns and considerations.
- **Safe and Supportive Environment**

The project implemented clear anti-harassment policies, designated focal points for addressing gender-related concerns, and provided access to psychosocial support services. This created a safer and more empowering environment for participants, particularly women, to voice their concerns and report any instances of harassment or discrimination without fear of retaliation.
- **Empowering Female Participants**

The project's efforts to promote gender equality yielded positive results. Participants, especially women, reported feeling more confident, vocal, and proactive in advocating for their rights and challenging discriminatory practices after participating in the training program. They also demonstrated a greater willingness to take on leadership roles within project teams and community initiatives.

Persistent Challenges and the Need for Transformative Change

While the YCLI project made significant strides in promoting gender equality within the training environment, the evaluation revealed that translating those gains into lasting change at the community level and within the broader political landscape remains a challenge.

Key Challenges:

- **Societal Barriers to Women's Political Participation**

Despite targeted recruitment efforts, the representation of women among youth parliamentarians remained low, reflecting the persistent gender imbalance in political leadership in Sri Lanka. This highlights the deeply ingrained societal norms and structural barriers that hinder women's access to and success in political spaces.
- **Limited Impact on Transforming Power Dynamics**

While the project successfully challenged gender stereotypes and promoted a more equitable division of labour within project teams, its impact on transforming gender roles and power dynamics within the broader community was less evident. This suggests a need

for a more deliberate and sustained integration of gender-transformative approaches throughout the project lifecycle.

Addressing the Needs of Other Marginalized Groups

The YCLI project demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity beyond gender, actively seeking to engage youth from diverse backgrounds, including those from marginalized communities. The project team employed a multi-pronged approach to identify and recruit participants from these groups, including:

- **Partnering with youth organizations and groups**
The project reached out to organizations like the Federation of Youth Clubs, which have a broad reach among youth. There were instances of targeted outreach to specific marginalized groups such as disability forums and indigenous community group. An open call for applications was made to ensure a diverse participant pool.
- **Conducting targeted outreach campaigns**
This involved disseminating information about the program through various channels, including social media, posters in public spaces, and presentations at universities, schools, and community centres.
- **Including questions about gender identity and disability in the application form**
This allowed the project team to identify individuals from marginalized groups and provide necessary accommodations to facilitate their participation.

Challenges and Opportunities for Inclusive Participation

While the project's efforts to include marginalized groups were commendable, and there was some representation from marginalized groups, the evaluation revealed that the representation of certain groups, particularly people with disabilities and individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, remained limited. This suggests that:

- More proactive and tailored outreach strategies are needed to reach marginalized groups who might face unique barriers to participation, such as a lack of access to information, social stigma, or transportation challenges.
- The project could have benefited from stronger partnerships with organizations specializing in disability rights and LGBTQ+ inclusion, leveraging their expertise to create a more accessible and supportive environment for participants from these groups.

Project Management and Monitoring

This section analyses the effectiveness of the YCLI project's management and monitoring strategies, examining the mechanisms used to guide project implementation, track progress, identify challenges, and inform decision-making. The evaluation assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the project's approach, highlighting best practices and identifying areas for improvement in future initiatives.

Project Management - A Collaborative Framework with Opportunities for Enhancement

The YCLI project adopted a collaborative management structure, involving multiple UN agencies, the National Youth Services Council (NYSC), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), to leverage their combined expertise and resources. This approach, with joint outcomes, pooled funding, and a

shared commitment to project objectives, fostered a more integrated and holistic approach compared to traditional siloed models of UN project implementation.

Strengths of the Collaborative Framework

- **Harnessing Diverse Expertise**
The project team comprised individuals from WHO, UNDP, UNV, and NYSC, each bringing their unique knowledge, skills, and networks to the table. This ensured a comprehensive understanding of the project's thematic areas, its target audience, and the context in which it operated.
- **Promoting Shared Ownership**
The joint ownership of project outcomes and the pooled funding structure encouraged collaboration and accountability among partner agencies, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for achieving the project's goals.
- **Facilitating Regular Communication**
The project team established weekly coordination meetings involving representatives from all implementing partners and the project team. These meetings provided a platform for sharing updates, discussing challenges, and making timely adjustments to the implementation strategy based on feedback from the field.

Challenges Encountered

Despite the benefits of the collaborative framework, the project encountered several challenges related to project management:

- **Lack of Clarity in Roles and Responsibilities**
The absence of a clearly defined project coordination framework that has been clearly communicated across key stakeholders, including service providers, indicating the roles, authority levels, responsibilities, and procurement protocols led to confusion, communication challenges, and delays in decision-making. This ambiguity impacted the efficiency of procurement processes, the development of training modules, and the allocation of resources.
- **Inconsistent Communication and Feedback Mechanisms**
While weekly meetings and TAG meetings provided formal channels for communication, feedback from participants, field coordinators, and implementing partners was not consistently collected or effectively integrated into decision-making. This resulted in a lack of transparency, potential delays in addressing challenges, and missed opportunities for learning and improvement.
- **Service Provider Capacity and Performance**
The selection of Curve Up, a service provider with limited experience and capacity, proved to be a costly decision. Their struggles in managing the module development process, coordinating resource persons, and handling logistical arrangements contributed to delays and dissatisfaction among some stakeholders.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Tracking Progress and Measuring Impact

The project implemented a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), utilizing a results framework, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Personal Development Plans (PDPs), and regular monitoring visits to track progress, identify challenges, and assess the project's impact.

Strengths of the M&E Framework

- **Results Framework**
The project's results framework provided a clear articulation of the project's intended outcomes and outputs, outlining specific indicators and targets for measuring progress.
- **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**
The TAG committee played a valuable role in the initial design and planning phases, providing technical guidance, reviewing project proposals, and offering recommendations for implementation.
- **Personal Development Plans (PDPs)**
The PDPs, completed by all participants, offered a personalized approach to tracking individual progress, assessing leadership skills, and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Monitoring Visits**
Project leads and CSO representatives conducted monitoring visits to community project sites, providing on-the-ground insights, identifying challenges, and offering support to youth teams.

Limitations of the M&E System

However, the evaluation also revealed several limitations in the project's monitoring and evaluation system:

- **Inadequate Focus on Community Project Monitoring**
The project's M&E efforts primarily focused on the training program and the CNA phase, with less emphasis on systematically tracking the progress, impact, and sustainability of community projects. This limited the project team's ability to provide timely support to project teams, identify potential risks, and ensure accountability in the use of funds.

For instance, while the evaluation highlighted delays and challenges faced during the implementation of the "Hospital Renovation at Galaboda Village" project, there is no documentation detailing when these issues arose, the specific actions taken by the project team to address them, or how those interventions impacted the project's progress. This lack of detailed monitoring data hinders a thorough understanding of the challenges encountered and the effectiveness of the project team's response.
- **Limited Qualitative Data Collection**
The results framework primarily focused on quantitative indicators, failing to adequately capture the nuances of the project's impact on participants' attitudes, behaviours, perceptions, and the long-term effects on community well-being and social cohesion.

For example, while the evaluation noted an increase in participants' confidence and commitment to civic engagement during the training program, there was no systematic follow-up to assess whether these changes persisted after the project ended or translated into concrete actions within their communities. This lack of qualitative data limits the evaluation's ability to assess the project's transformative impact and the sustainability of its outcomes.

Key themes and patterns observed

Analysis of the evaluation data across the dimensions of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and gender equality and human rights revealed several key themes and patterns:

1. Navigating a Complex and Dynamic Context

The YCLI project operated within a challenging socio-political landscape marked by the enduring impact of past conflicts, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a deepening economic crisis, and the unprecedented Aragalaya protests. These external factors significantly impacted the project's implementation, requiring adaptability, flexibility, and ongoing adjustments to timelines, budgets, and strategies.

2. The Power of Collaboration and Partnerships

The project's collaborative framework, involving multiple UN agencies, NYSC, CSOs, and a diverse pool of resource persons, was a key strength, enabling the project to leverage a wide range of expertise and resources. However, the effectiveness of this collaboration was hindered at times by unclear roles and responsibilities, inconsistent communication, and challenges in managing the service provider.

3. The Transformative Potential of Youth Leadership

The project demonstrably empowered youth participants, enhancing their knowledge and skills, fostering a greater sense of agency, and promoting positive attitude shifts towards community engagement, volunteerism, and political participation. Participants actively applied their learnings in real-world settings, contributing to peacebuilding efforts, community development initiatives, and advocating for social change.

4. Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

The project successfully bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application through its emphasis on interactive training methods, community needs assessments, and the implementation of community projects. This hands-on approach enabled participants to translate their learning into tangible actions, enhancing their leadership skills and their ability to contribute to their communities.

5. The Need for Sustainable Solutions

While the project achieved positive short-term impacts, ensuring the long-term sustainability of its outcomes remains a significant challenge. The lack of ongoing funding for community projects, the absence of a dedicated support structure for the network of trained youth leaders, and the uncertainty regarding NYSC's commitment and capacity to integrate project outcomes into its existing programs pose significant threats to the project's lasting impact.

6. Addressing Gender Equality: A Multifaceted Challenge

The project demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity, resulting in a more equitable and empowering environment for young women. However, the evaluation also highlighted the persistent influence of deeply ingrained societal barriers that hinder women's participation in leadership roles, particularly within the political sphere. Achieving sustainable gender equality requires a more transformative approach that addresses these systemic issues and provides ongoing support to women beyond the project's timeframe.

7. The Importance of Robust Monitoring and Evaluation

A comprehensive and well-designed monitoring and evaluation framework is crucial for tracking progress, identifying challenges, measuring impact, and informing decision-making. The YCLI project's monitoring and evaluation system, while structured, could be strengthened by incorporating more qualitative indicators, improving data collection and analysis, and establishing mechanisms for tracking the long-term impact and sustainability of project outcomes.

Summary of Objectives achieved (Results Framework)

The following table summarizes the achievements for each output of the YCLI project, considering its completion in July 2023

Table 4. Results Framework

Outcome	Output	Activities	Status as of Project Completion (July 2023)
Outcome 1: Next-generation young leaders productively engaged with state and non-state actors to promote peace and social cohesion.	Output 1.1: Capacity of youth parliamentarians and youth leaders enhanced to effectively engage in political and civic spaces and advocate for national unity using a setting-based approach for health and wellbeing.	1.1.1: Completed: 20 conflict and gender-sensitive training modules developed and integrated into the NYSC professional development curriculum.	Achieved: The project successfully delivered its training program, equipping participants with the necessary knowledge and skills for promoting peace and social cohesion. The master trainer program contributed to building the capacity of NYSC staff for future training delivery.
		1.1.2: Completed: Two phases of training delivered to 573 youth participants, covering topics related to leadership, peacebuilding, community engagement, and health.	
		1.1.3: Completed: Master trainer program conducted for selected youth and NYSC officials.	
		1.1.4: Completed: Training on conducting Community Needs Assessments (CNAs) and developing Community Action Plans (CAPs) delivered to all participants.	
	Output 1.2: Youth Leaders, community and youth volunteers, and civil society jointly/collaboratively address conflict and emergency-related psychosocial and relational needs in a created healthy community setting.	1.2.1: Partially Achieved: Joint working groups established in some districts to support CAP implementation (CSOs and Provincial Coordinators), but their effectiveness and long-term sustainability varied. Centrally the UN organizations leading the project and NYSE formed the Working Group.	Partially Achieved: While the project facilitated community engagement and project implementation, the effectiveness and sustainability of joint working groups and mentorship programs varied across districts. Limited funding and time

Outcome	Output	Activities	Status as of Project Completion (July 2023)
			constraints hampered the full realization of this output's potential.
		1.2.2: Partially Achieved: Support provided for the implementation of 7 community projects, but some faced challenges related to limited funding, and time constraints.	
		1.2.3: Partially Achieved: Mentorship programs were facilitated through informal connections and interactions during training and community engagement, but a structured mentorship system was not established.	
Outcome 2: Target state and non-state actors encourage youth voices and advocate for national unity and social cohesion using established platforms.	Output 2.1: Target state and non-state institutions exposed to principles and the evidence-base relating to the importance of youth participation in national unity and social cohesion approaches.	2.1.1: Achieved: community dialogues in terms of focus group discussions with youth were conducted to support the development of a national youth policy, while YCLI youth participants were consulted on the draft youth policy.	Partially Achieved: The project-initiated community consultations and initiated policy development, but its impact on influencing policy dialogues and parliamentary engagement was limited due to time constraints and political factors. No evidence was found of the completion and utilization of policy papers.
		2.1.2: Not Achieved: The project documentation mentions the development of two policy papers on healthy settings and social cohesion. However, the evaluation could not confirm their completion or their impact on policy dialogue.	

Outcome	Output	Activities	Status as of Project Completion (July 2023)
		2.1.3: Partially Achieved: Youth parliamentary debates around the developed policy papers were not conducted. However, some youth debates were conducted at the Peace Day celebrations event.	
	Output 2.2: Target state and non-state institutional platforms strengthened to promote youth's responsible participation in developing cohesive, safe, and healthy settings.	2.2.1: Partially Achieved: Only one Volunteer Centre was established at the Uva Wellassa University as most other institutions were not willing to participate. Further, progress was made in establishing a national training and learning management center at NYSC, including the development of a digital platform and an LMS. However, the full integration of these resources into NYSC's programs and their long-term sustainability remain uncertain.	Partially Achieved: The project contributed to strengthening institutional platforms at Uva Wellassa University and NYSC, but their effectiveness in promoting sustained youth engagement will depend on NYSC's commitment, capacity, and the availability of ongoing resources.

While the YCLI project achieved notable successes in equipping young leaders with knowledge and skills, fostering a sense of community, and initiating community-driven projects, its overall achievement of objectives was mixed. The project effectively delivered its training programs, surpassing its target participant number and garnering positive feedback. However, translating this capacity-building into concrete and sustained action at the community and national levels faced significant challenges. Limited funding, time constraints, and a lack of clarity regarding certain aspects of project management hindered the full realization of the project's ambitious goals. Despite these limitations, the project demonstrably promoted social cohesion among youth, fostered valuable partnerships, and laid a foundation for future youth-led peacebuilding initiatives in Sri Lanka. The project's ultimate success in achieving its long-term objectives will hinge on the commitment and capacity of national partners, particularly NYSC, to sustain its initiatives, integrate its outputs, and ensure the continued engagement and empowerment of young people in Sri Lanka.

08 Overall Conclusions

The evaluation of the YCLI project, based on a thorough analysis of project documents, interviews with key stakeholders, a participant survey, and focus group discussions with community beneficiaries, yielded several key conclusions.

Conclusion 01: The YCLI project effectively addressed a pressing need for youth leadership development and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. Its conceptual framework, grounded in the Healthy Settings Approach and aligned with global best practices, demonstrated a strong understanding of the challenges faced by young people in navigating a complex socio-political landscape.

Conclusion 02: The project's collaborative framework, involving multiple UN agencies, NYSC, and CSOs, successfully leveraged the unique strengths and expertise of each partner, fostering a more integrated and holistic approach to youth empowerment. However, a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, inconsistent communication, and the dynamic nature of decision-making processes created challenges, particularly during the training module development and procurement phases.

Conclusion 03: The project's training program effectively delivered its intended content, enhancing participants' knowledge and skills related to leadership, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, community engagement, and project management. The training fostered a positive shift in attitudes towards community engagement, volunteerism, and political participation, indicating a transformative impact on participants' perspectives and aspirations.

Conclusion 04: The community project implementation phase (implementation of CAPs), while showcasing the potential of youth-led initiatives to address local needs and foster collaboration, faced significant challenges related to time constraints, limited funding, contractor management, and the need for a more consistent and participatory approach. These challenges hindered the project's ability to fully realize its intended goals of community transformation and lasting social cohesion.

Conclusion 05: The project demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity, resulting in a near 40% Female - 60% male gender balance among participants, a positive shift in attitudes towards gender norms, and the empowerment of young women to take on leadership roles. However, the project's impact on addressing deeply ingrained societal barriers to women's participation in political leadership was limited, highlighting the need for more transformative interventions and ongoing support beyond the project's timeframe.

Conclusion 06: While the project successfully enhanced local and national capacities for youth leadership, community engagement, and peacebuilding, the long-term sustainability of these capacities remains uncertain. The lack of a dedicated organization to oversee project activities, the absence of ongoing funding for community projects, and the uncertainty regarding NYSC's commitment and capacity to integrate project outcomes into its existing programs pose significant challenges to sustaining the project's impact.

Conclusion 07: Despite achieving positive outcomes and demonstrating a clear commitment to efficient resource utilization, the project's overall cost-effectiveness was hindered by delays in implementation, bureaucratic hurdles, challenges with service provider performance, and the need for multiple cost extensions. A more streamlined and strategic approach to project management, procurement, and resource allocation could have enhanced the project's value for money and maximized its impact.

09 Best practices and lessons learned

The YCLI project, despite encountering challenges, yielded valuable insights and demonstrated several best practices that can be replicated in future youth development and peacebuilding initiatives. The evaluation also highlighted key lessons learned, offering guidance for strengthening project design, implementation, and sustainability.

Best Practices

- **Collaborative Consortium Model:** The project's collaborative framework, involving multiple UN agencies, NYSC, and CSOs, with joint outcomes and pooled funding, proved to be a successful approach. This model facilitated a more integrated and holistic approach, leveraging the unique strengths and expertise of each partner organization.
- **Healthy Settings Approach:** The integration of the Healthy Settings Approach into a peacebuilding project was innovative and effective in creating a neutral bridging space for diverse stakeholders, promoting a holistic understanding of well-being, and addressing the social determinants of health and peace.
- **Leveraging a Neutral Theme for Cross-Community Engagement:** The project's utilization of the "Healthy Settings Approach," framing peacebuilding within the context of health and well-being, proved to be a highly effective strategy for engaging youth from diverse backgrounds. This neutral and universally relatable theme transcended potential sensitivities surrounding traditional peacebuilding initiatives, fostering a more inclusive and collaborative environment for youth from different ethnic and religious communities to connect, build relationships, and work together towards shared goals.
- **Interactive and Participatory Training:** The project's training program employed a variety of interactive and participatory methods, including group discussions, case studies, role-playing, and outdoor activities. This approach, coupled with the expertise of the resource persons, fostered a positive learning environment, enhanced participant engagement, and facilitated the application of theoretical concepts to practical scenarios.
- **Empowerment of Youth Participants:** The project placed youth at the center of its activities, providing them with opportunities to identify community needs, develop solutions, and implement projects. This empowerment approach fostered a sense of ownership, built confidence, and enhanced participants' leadership skills.
- **Proactive Approach to Gender Equality and Inclusion:** The project prioritized gender equality and inclusivity from its inception, implementing a quota system for female participants, conducting targeted outreach to marginalized groups, incorporating a dedicated gender module into the training program, and establishing clear anti-harassment policies and support mechanisms.

Lessons Learned

- **Importance of Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** A well-defined operational project management framework with clear roles, responsibilities, decision-making authority, and communication protocols for all partners is essential for ensuring efficient and effective collaboration, minimizing confusion, and preventing delays.

- **Integrating Health into Peacebuilding:** The project's unique conceptualization of basing health as a Navigator for Peace, utilizing the “Healthy settings” approach demonstrated the effectiveness of using health as a unifying framework for engaging diverse stakeholders and addressing the root causes of conflict. This approach, focusing on the holistic well-being of individuals and communities, offers a promising model for future peacebuilding initiatives.
- **Empowering Youth as Agents of Change:** The project's success in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead community-driven initiatives highlights their transformative potential as peacebuilders. Investing in youth leadership development and providing them with opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes are crucial for fostering sustainable peace and social cohesion.
- **Need for Streamlined Communication and Coordination:** Establish a robust and transparent system for communication and feedback, involving all stakeholders, including participants, implementing partners, and service providers. This can be facilitated through regular meetings, a centralized communication platform, and clear channels for feedback collection and response.
- **Value of Early and Meaningful CSO Engagement:** Integrate CSO partners into the project design and planning phases, leveraging their expertise, local knowledge, and networks to enhance the project's relevance, feasibility, and sustainability.
- **Proactive Risk Management and Contingency Planning:** Develop comprehensive risk assessments and contingency plans that consider potential external factors, such as political instability, economic volatility, and public health crises. Incorporate flexibility into project timelines, budgets, and implementation strategies to adapt to unforeseen challenges and mitigate disruptions.
- **Importance of Thorough Participant Selection:** Implement a rigorous selection process that assesses not only the qualifications and experience of potential participants but also their commitment, availability, and genuine interest in the project's objectives. Clearly communicate project expectations and time commitments to ensure a good fit between participant profiles and project requirements.
- **Sustainable Funding and Support Structures:** Secure long-term funding for community projects and the continued engagement of youth leaders beyond the initial grant period. Explore options for establishing a dedicated organization or platform to oversee project activities, maintain the network of trained youth, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize resources for sustained impact.
- **Integrating Gender-Transformative Approaches:** Go beyond training and promoting gender balance and actively integrate gender-transformative approaches throughout the project lifecycle. This involves conducting a gender analysis to understand the context-specific power dynamics and gender roles, developing gender-responsive interventions (for example within community projects), and challenging harmful norms to promote a more equitable and just society.
Further, despite implementing best practices for gender equality and inclusive participation, existing social barriers continue to hinder outcomes. This underscores the importance of gender analysis to better understand these communities and their social

barriers. By doing so, it will be possible to be more effective at navigating these challenges and enhance future involvement of women and girls.

- **Robust Monitoring and Evaluation for Impact Assessment:** Develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework that tracks both quantitative and qualitative indicators, including those related to the long-term impact of the project on participants, communities, and social cohesion. Implement a system for collecting disaggregated data to track the inclusion and empowerment of marginalized groups. Conduct periodic follow-up assessments and evaluations to measure the project's sustained impact and identify areas for improvement in future initiatives.

By integrating these best practices and lessons learned into the design and implementation of future initiatives, stakeholders can contribute to a more effective, efficient, and sustainable approach to youth development and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka.

10 Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed towards UN agencies, NYSC, and other stakeholders involved in designing and implementing future youth development and peacebuilding projects in Sri Lanka:

01. **Finding:** The YCLI project faced significant delays due to external factors (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis, political instability) and internal bureaucratic processes. These delays impacted the project's overall efficiency, leading to a compressed timeframe for implementation, budget overruns, and potential participant fatigue.

Relates to: UN Agencies, NYSC

Importance: Ensuring timely project implementation is crucial for maximizing the use of resources and achieving intended outcomes. Delays can lead to cost overruns, demotivation among participants, and a reduced impact on communities.

Recommendation: While it is understood that predicting the impact of COVID 19 and an impactful economic crisis may not be feasible, it is important to develop a comprehensive risk management plan that anticipates potential disruptions and outlines clear mitigation strategies to ensure project continuity and minimize the impact of unforeseen events.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Conduct a thorough risk assessment during the project design phase, identifying potential external factors (e.g., economic volatility, political instability, natural disasters, and public health crises) and internal risks (e.g., bureaucratic delays, staff turnover).
- Develop a detailed contingency plan with alternative implementation strategies, flexible budgets and timelines, and clear communication protocols for informing stakeholders about any necessary changes.
- Regularly review and update the risk management plan throughout the project lifecycle to account for evolving circumstances and emerging challenges.

- Allocate resources including staff to manage these activities consistently

02. **Finding:** The selection of some of the service providers proved to be a challenge for the project. Some service providers lacked the necessary experience, technical capacity, and financial management skills to effectively fulfil their responsibilities, leading to delays in module development, dissatisfaction among resource persons, and concerns about financial accountability.

Relates to: UN Agencies

Importance: Selecting competent and reliable service providers is crucial for ensuring the quality of project deliverables, preventing delays, and maximizing the efficient use of resources. A poorly performing service provider can lead to budget overruns, delays in deliverables, and dissatisfaction among project staff and beneficiaries, ultimately hindering the project's effectiveness and efficiency.

Recommendation: Implement a more rigorous and transparent vetting process for selecting service providers, including a comprehensive assessment of their experience, capacity, technical expertise, and track record in managing similar projects.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Develop clear and detailed evaluation criteria for assessing proposals from service providers, prioritizing those with demonstrated experience in the relevant technical areas (curriculum development, training delivery, logistics management) and a strong understanding of project management principles, financial management best practices, and ethical conduct.
- Conduct thorough background checks and verify the credentials and references of shortlisted service providers.
- Include site visits or interviews with key personnel from the service provider as part of the evaluation process.
- Develop clear and comprehensive contracts with well-defined deliverables, timelines, payment terms, performance indicators, and accountability mechanisms.

03. **Finding:** The project's reliance on a (geographically) centralized residential training model, while allowing for comprehensive coverage of the training modules, limited its flexibility in responding to participant needs and adapting to unforeseen disruptions, particularly those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis.

Relates to: UN Agencies, NYSC

Importance: A flexible and accessible training model may be more suitable for ensuring broad participation, accommodating diverse needs, and minimizing disruptions caused by unforeseen events, such as pandemics, economic crises, or political instability.

Recommendation: Explore alternative training delivery methods that offer greater flexibility and accessibility, such as decentralized workshops, hybrid models (combining online and in-person

sessions), or modular training programs that allow participants to choose specific modules based on their interests and needs.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the preferred training formats and delivery methods for different participant groups, considering factors such as geographic location, access to technology, and time constraints.
- Develop a range of training modules that can be delivered in various formats, including online, in-person, and blended learning approaches.
- Pilot alternative training models and evaluate their effectiveness in reaching diverse participants and achieving learning outcomes.

04. **Finding:** The project encountered challenges in maintaining consistent communication and coordination among implementing partners, particularly regarding financial management, procurement, and decision-making processes. This lack of clarity led to delays, duplication of efforts, and strained relationships between partners, hindering the project's overall effectiveness and efficiency.

Relates to: UN Agencies, NYSC, CSOs

Importance: Effective communication and coordination are crucial for the successful implementation of multi-stakeholder projects. Clear and consistent communication ensures that all partners are aligned on project objectives, timelines, and responsibilities. It enables timely problem-solving, prevents duplication of efforts, and fosters a more collaborative and harmonious working environment.

Recommendation: Develop a robust project management (or coordination) framework that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes for each partner, complemented by detailed communication protocols and reporting lines.

Recommended Action Steps:

- **Define Clear Roles & Responsibilities**
 - Create a comprehensive matrix or chart that outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of each partner organization (UN agencies, NYSC, CSOs, and service providers) for each phase of the project.
 - Ensure that the matrix clearly identifies the tasks, deliverables, and deadlines assigned to each partner, as well as their reporting lines and decision-making authority.
- **Develop Detailed Communication Protocols**
 - Establish clear channels and frequencies for communication between partners, including regular meetings (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly), email updates, and a designated point of contact for each organization.

- Specify the types of information that should be communicated through each channel and ensure that all partners have access to the necessary communication tools and technologies.
 - **Establish a Centralized Information Repository**
 - Create a shared online platform, such as a project website, a shared drive, or a project management software, where all project-related documents, reports, meeting minutes, and other important information can be accessed by all partners.
 - Ensure that the platform is user-friendly, regularly updated, and accessible to all stakeholders, taking into account varying levels of digital literacy and internet access.
 - **Conduct an Inception Workshop**
 - Organize a project inception workshop that brings together representatives from all partner organizations to:
 - Review and finalize the project management framework, communication protocols, and reporting mechanisms.
 - Clarify expectations, address any concerns, and foster a shared understanding of the project's goals, objectives, and implementation strategy.
 - Build relationships and establish a foundation for effective collaboration.
 - **Provide Ongoing Training and Support**
 - Offer training to project staff and implementing partners on the project management framework, communication protocols, and reporting procedures to ensure consistent understanding and adherence to established guidelines.
 - Provide ongoing support and mentorship to partners, particularly in navigating the complexities of multi-agency collaboration and addressing any challenges that arise.
05. **Finding:** The project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, while utilizing Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to track individual participant progress and providing some qualitative data, lacked a comprehensive approach to capturing the project's broader qualitative impact, particularly regarding community-level change, long-term outcomes, and the nuances of participant experiences and perspectives.

Relates to: UN Agencies

Importance: A robust and comprehensive M&E framework is essential for capturing the project's full impact, identifying areas for improvement, and guiding informed decision-making. While quantitative data is essential for tracking progress and outputs, qualitative data provides a deeper understanding of the project's transformative effects on individuals, communities, and institutions, offering valuable insights into how the project has contributed to changes in attitudes, behaviours, relationships, and social dynamics.

Recommendation: Develop a more comprehensive M&E framework that integrates a robust qualitative data collection strategy alongside quantitative measures. This will enable a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the project's impact and provide a stronger basis for assessing its effectiveness and sustainability.

Recommended Action Steps:

- **Develop a Comprehensive Qualitative Data Collection Strategy**
 - Consider incorporating a variety of methods, such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, and observational data, to capture the richness and complexity of the project's impact on individuals, communities, and institutions.
 - Gather qualitative data not only from youth participants but also from community members, CSO representatives, government officials, and other key stakeholders to gain diverse perspectives on the project's impact.
 - Conduct qualitative data collection at various stages of the project, including baseline assessments, mid-term reviews, and post-project follow-up, to track changes over time and assess the sustainability of the project's impact.
- **Include a Long-Term Perspective**
 - Develop mechanisms to track participants' engagement and progress beyond the project's lifespan, assessing the sustainability of changes in their attitudes, behaviours, and contributions to their communities. This could involve periodic surveys, follow-up interviews, or alumni gatherings.
 - Conduct longitudinal studies or periodic assessments to monitor the long-term impact of community projects on factors such as social cohesion, access to resources, and economic opportunities.
- **Broaden the Scope of Qualitative Indicators**
 - Develop indicators that capture a wider range of qualitative outcomes, including changes in perceptions, relationships, community dynamics, and the application of key concepts like the Healthy Settings Approach.
 - Incorporate open-ended questions and prompts in surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions to encourage participants and stakeholders to share their experiences, perspectives, and insights in their own words.

06. **Finding:** The project's impact on transforming deeply ingrained societal barriers to women's participation in leadership roles was limited, particularly in the political sphere. Despite efforts to promote gender equality, the evaluation revealed that the project's impact on addressing deeply ingrained societal barriers that hinder women's participation in leadership roles was limited.

Relates to: UN Agencies

Importance: Achieving meaningful and sustainable gender equality requires a holistic and proactive approach that goes beyond promoting gender balance or conducting gender sensitivity training. A

dedicated Gender Equality Strategy, informed by a thorough gender analysis and implemented throughout the project lifecycle, is crucial for:

- A Gender Analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the specific gender-related challenges and opportunities within the project's target communities and institutions. It helps identify existing power dynamics, gender roles, social norms, and cultural beliefs that may hinder women's participation and leadership.
- A well-defined strategy enables the project to design and implement interventions that address the root causes of gender inequality, challenge discriminatory practices, and promote transformative change in gender roles and relations.
- Establishing gender-responsive indicators and data collection methods allows the project to track its progress in achieving gender equality objectives, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and identify areas for improvement.
- Partnering with organizations specializing in gender equality and human rights leverages their expertise, resources, and networks to strengthen the project's capacity to address the complex and multifaceted aspects of gender inequality.

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive **Gender Equality Strategy** that is implemented across all project phases, ensuring that gender considerations are systematically integrated into project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Engage a gender specialist to conduct a thorough gender analysis of the project context, identifying existing power dynamics, gender roles, and potential barriers to women's participation. Utilize the findings to inform the design and implementation of all project activities.
- Establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators that track the project's impact on gender equality, women's empowerment, and the inclusion of marginalized groups. This should include both quantitative indicators (e.g., number of women participating in leadership roles) and qualitative indicators (e.g., changes in attitudes towards women's leadership).
- Collaborate with organizations specializing in gender equality, disability rights, and human rights to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks. Involve these partners in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities to ensure that interventions are gender-responsive and address the specific needs of marginalized groups.
- Integrate a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) checklist into all project processes, including recruitment, planning, and the implementation of workshops, to ensure that gender considerations are consistently addressed.
- Analyze how gender intersects with other factors such as religion, age, geography, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status to ensure that interventions are tailored to the needs of diverse groups of women and girls.

07. **Finding:** While the project aimed to support the implementation of 10 community projects, it ultimately funded only 7 due to time constraints and budget limitations. This suggests that while

the project successfully facilitated community engagement through needs assessments and action planning, resource constraints hindered the full realization of this objective.

Relates to: UN Agencies

Importance: Providing adequate funding and sufficient time for community project implementation is crucial for empowering youth to address local needs, fostering community ownership, and achieving the project's intended impact. Increasing the number of projects supported would allow more participants to gain practical experience, broaden the project's reach within communities, and potentially generate a more significant and sustainable impact.

Recommendation: In future projects, consider allocating a larger portion of the budget to support the development and implementation of community projects. This will ensure that more youth have the opportunity to engage in hands-on community development work and that projects have adequate resources to achieve their intended outcomes.

Recommended Action Steps:

Conduct a Needs Assessment - During the project design phase, conduct a thorough needs assessment to determine the number of community projects that can be realistically supported within the available budget and timeframe. Consider factors such as the average cost of project implementation in the target communities, the capacity of implementing partners, and the availability of qualified mentors.

- Prioritize securing adequate funding for community projects, potentially through a combination of donor contributions, government funding, or public-private partnerships.
- Investigate innovative financing mechanisms, such as crowdfunding campaigns, social impact bonds, or micro-loan programs, to supplement traditional funding sources and support a greater number of community-led initiatives.
- Develop clear selection criteria that prioritize projects that address critical community needs, demonstrate strong community ownership, and incorporate strategies for long-term sustainability.

08. **Finding:** While the project aimed to support the implementation of 10 community projects, it ultimately funded only 7 due to time and budget constraints. This limited the number of participants who could directly lead a project, although some participants may have supported other teams' projects. Furthermore, several trainers expressed a desire to be more involved in the community project phase, offering their expertise and mentorship to youth teams.

Relates to: UN Agencies, Resource Persons

Importance: Expanding opportunities for youth engagement in community projects, both as leaders and supporting participants, can maximize the project's impact and create a more enriching learning experience. Furthermore, involving trainers in the community project phase can provide valuable mentorship, enhance the application of learned skills, and strengthen the link between theoretical training and practical experience.

Recommendation: Future projects should adopt a multi-faceted approach to community project implementation, maximizing participation opportunities for youth and leveraging the expertise of trainers to provide guidance and support.

Recommended Action Steps:

- **Formalize a System for Participant Collaboration:** Establish a structured system for encouraging and facilitating collaboration between project teams. This could involve:
 - Creating a platform or database where teams can share their project ideas and needs, and participants can express interest in supporting other initiatives.
 - Organizing workshops or networking events that bring together different project teams to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing.
 - Developing guidelines for participant roles and responsibilities within collaborative projects to ensure clarity and accountability.
- **Integrate Trainer Expertise into CAP Implementation:**
 - Explore options for involving trainers who express interest in providing mentorship and support to youth teams during the community project phase. This could involve:
 - Assigning trainers as mentors to specific project teams, offering guidance on project planning, implementation, and monitoring.
 - Organizing site visits or workshops where trainers can share their expertise and provide feedback to youth teams.
 - Creating opportunities for virtual consultations or online discussions between trainers and participants.
- **Develop Clear Guidelines and Communication:** Communicate the project's vision for collaborative engagement and the roles of trainers and supporting participants clearly to all stakeholders. Establish clear guidelines and expectations for collaboration, mentorship, and knowledge sharing.

09. **Finding:** The absence of a dedicated organization or framework to oversee project activities, maintain the youth network, advocate for policy changes, and mobilize resources after the project's end poses a significant threat to its long-term sustainability.

Relates to: UN Agencies, Donors, NYSC

Importance: Without a dedicated support structure, the valuable capacities, knowledge, and relationships established through the project risk being lost, limiting its long-term impact. Ongoing support is crucial for nurturing youth leadership, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that project outcomes are integrated into existing systems and policies.

Recommendation: Collaboratively explore the feasibility of establishing a dedicated Youth Leadership and Peacebuilding Foundation or a similar structure to carry forward the project's legacy.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Conduct a feasibility study to assess the need, potential structure, and operational modalities for such a foundation.
- Secure commitments from key stakeholders, including UN agencies, NYSC, and potential donors, to support the establishment and operation of the foundation.
- Develop a comprehensive business plan outlining the foundation's mission, objectives, activities, and funding strategies.
- Identify and engage potential board members, staff, and volunteers to operationalize the foundation's activities.

010. **Finding:** The project lacked a comprehensive plan for documenting and disseminating its successes, challenges, and lessons learned, limiting its potential to contribute to broader knowledge sharing and influence best practices in the field of youth development and peacebuilding.

Relates to: UN Agencies, NYSC, Communication & Media Specialists

Importance: Sharing knowledge and lessons learned from the project is crucial for promoting best practices, informing the design of future initiatives, and maximizing the project's impact beyond its immediate beneficiaries. Effectively communicating the project's achievements and learnings to a wider audience can inspire other organizations, influence policy dialogues, and contribute to a broader understanding of effective strategies for youth engagement in peacebuilding and development.

Recommendation: Develop a Comprehensive Dissemination Plan: Establish a detailed plan for documenting and disseminating the project's successes, challenges, and lessons learned, utilizing a multi-faceted approach that includes traditional knowledge-sharing methods as well as strategic media engagement.

Recommended Action Steps:

- Identify key audiences (e.g., policymakers, other UN agencies, CSOs, youth organizations, donors) and tailor communication messages and materials accordingly.
- Establish a user-friendly website or online platform to house project documentation, reports, case studies, multimedia content (e.g., videos, photos), and other resources.
- Produce high-quality reports and publications that document the project's methodology, findings, lessons learned, and best practices.
- Develop a media engagement strategy that includes:
 - Press releases and media advisories to highlight key project achievements and events.
 - Production of compelling stories and multimedia content for dissemination through traditional and social media channels.
 - Collaboration with journalists and media outlets to showcase the project's impact and generate positive coverage.

- Actively participate in conferences, workshops, webinars, and other relevant events to share project findings, best practices, and lessons learned with a wider audience.
- Utilize social media platforms to share updates, stories, and visuals about the project, engaging with target audiences and fostering online dialogue.

By incorporating these recommendations into the design and implementation of future initiatives, stakeholders can build upon the successes of the YCLI project, mitigate its limitations, and create even more impactful and sustainable programs that empower Sri Lankan youth to become agents of positive change.

Annexes

Annex 01. Perception Survey

Proposed Survey Questionnaire for the Youth Leaders that participated in the WHO Youth Community Leadership Initiative (YCLI) Programme

Introduction

Dear Youth Leader,

You are invited to participate in the Endline Youth Perception Survey. Participants have been requested to complete the survey for evaluation purposes.

This questionnaire is for participants who were trained as part of the Youth Community Leadership Initiative (YCLI) project: **Youth Participation and Engagement for a Healthier, Equitable, Safer and United Sri Lanka.** (Project was active within years 2021 – 2023)

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have any queries regarding the survey please kindly forward them to amar@margasrilanka.org.

Use a tick mark to select options

1. Startup, basic demographics

1.1. YCLI reference/index No of Participant

YCLI Index No: _____ 1

1.2. What is your Name?

Name of Survey Participant: _____ 1

1.3. Interviewer’s Name (If survey is not filled by participant)

Interviewer Name: _____ 1

1.4. What is your gender identity? Gender Equality and Human Rights

Male	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to specify	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify): _____	4	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.5. What is your Ethnicity? (Select one option) Gender Equality and Human Rights

Sinhalese	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sri Lankan Tamil	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian Tamil	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sri Lankan Moor	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Malay	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burgher	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indigenous community	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to answer	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	9	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.6. What is your Religion? (Select one option) Gender Equality and Human Rights

Buddhist	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Islam	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roman Catholic	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Christian	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to answer	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	8	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Participant Selection:

2.1. Did you experience any screening or selection process before being chosen for the YCLI project?

Yes	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.2. If yes, please describe the selection process you went through.

Submission of CV/resume	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Filling an Online application	2	
Interview	3	
Selection tests/assessments (e.g., written, practical)	4	
Submission of written statements or essays	5	
Group discussion or group activity	6	
Presentation	7	
Portfolio review (e.g. projects or initiatives undertaken by you before)	8	
Skill-based evaluation (e.g., public speaking, leadership)	9	
Other (please specify)	10	

3. Training Sessions

3.1. Did you Participate in: (Select one option)

Only the First Residential Training Program	1	
Both the first and second training programs	2	
Only the second training program	3	

3.2. How would you rate the delivery of the training modules in the first training?

Very Satisfied	1	
Satisfied	2	
Neutral	3	
Dissatisfied	4	
Very Dissatisfied	5	

3.3. How satisfied are you with the support provided from **service providers (CSO – Civil Society Organization) for completing the Community Needs Assessments (CNAs) after the first training session?**

Very Satisfied	1	
Satisfied	2	
Neutral	3	
Dissatisfied	4	
Very Dissatisfied	5	

- 3.4. How satisfied are you with the support provided from project coordinators for completing the community needs assessment (CNAs) after the first training session?

Very Satisfied	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satisfied	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissatisfied	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Dissatisfied	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question number 3.5 is only relevant to participants who attended the second training session.

- 3.5. How would you rate the efficiency of the second training session in delivering the modular content?

Very Efficient	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efficient	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inefficient	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Inefficient	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 3.6. Which modules covered in the training did you find most valuable (Please tick the five modules according to the responses)

Understanding the Healthy Settings Approach - Dr. Shreenika Weliange	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting Community Needs Assessments - Mr. Aloka Gunasekera /Ms. Amali Rathnayake/ Mr. Senthilnathan Dharmalingam	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Equity and Empowerment - Mr. Velusamy Weerasingham	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do No Harm approach - Mr. Indrasiri Weganthalawatte	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collective leadership - Mr. Gayan Rajapakse	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Communication skills for young leaders - Mr. Stephen Lodziak	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young people's role in economic Development - Mr. Anushka Wijesinha	7	<input type="checkbox"/>

SDGs in action - United Nations Volunteers	8	
Healthy Lifestyles for young leaders - Dr. Manuja Perera	9	
Promoting communal integration - Mr. Indrasiri Weganthalawatte	10	
Responsible leaders - Mr Suchith Abeywickrama	11	
Problem solving skills for leaders - Mr Suchith Abeywickrama	12	
Young Leaders for Sustainable Development - Dr. Pavithra Jayawardena	13	
Managing stress and other difficult emotions - Ms. Vigitha Renganathan/ Ms. Nithila Theivendran/ Ms. Kusala Wettasinghe/ Mr. Chalana Wijesuriya/ Dr Ananda Galappaththi/ Mr. Aloka Weerasekera	14	
Documenting community interventions - Mr. Zihan Zarouk	15	
Future we want - Citra Social Innovation Lab	16	
Health determinants - Dr. Jayamal de Silva	17	
Reimagining volunteering - United Nations Volunteers	18	
Effective project management - Mr. Chaaminda Ratnayake	19	
Planning for Community Action - Dr. Manoj Fernando	20	

3.7. How has being selected as a participant in the entire training program impacted your perspectives or aspirations in peacebuilding?

Very significant impact	1	
Significant impact	2	
Moderate impact	3	
Minimal impact	4	
No impact	5	

3.8. Were the training sessions structured in a way that facilitated practical application of the learned skills from the training?

Yes	1	
Partially / Somewhat	2	
No	3	

3.9. To what extent did the trainers effectively engage participants and facilitate interactive learning during the training sessions?

To a Great Extent	1	<input type="text"/>
To Some Extent	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
To a Little Extent	4	<input type="text"/>
Not at All	5	<input type="text"/>

3.10. How would you rate the clarity of communication regarding the scheduling and content of the training sessions?

Very Clear	1	<input type="text"/>
Clear	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
Unclear	4	<input type="text"/>
Very Unclear	5	<input type="text"/>

3.11. How helpful were the training materials provided in enhancing your understanding of the project objectives and activities?

Very Helpful	1	<input type="text"/>
Helpful	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
Not Helpful	4	<input type="text"/>
Not Applicable	5	<input type="text"/>

3.12. If you participated either in one or both sessions of the YCLI training or any other project-related activity, please rate the following:
 (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree, 6= Other answers - specify)

(Select a relevant option for all items below)

	Selected Option Number (1 -6)	Interviewer Remarks
a. This program supports peacebuilding between groups (such as communities and people) in Sri Lanka	1	
b. This program helps to support social cohesion between communities and people in Sri Lanka	2	
c. The content of the training is relevant to the needs and priorities of youth in Sri Lanka	3	
d. The project identified the support necessary for you to deliver the expected results/ services	4	
e. You experienced personal or professional development as a result of this project	5	
f. The support provided was relevant to promote youth political participation and engagement	6	
g. The project was effective in reaching its target groups including marginalized and under-represented groups (People with low incomes, LGBTQ+, indigenous people) <small>Note: LGBTQ is an acronym for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer</small>	7	
h. You received sufficient financial resources in a timely manner to carry out activities expected under the project.	8	

	Selected Option Number (1 -6)	Interviewer Remarks
i. Available financial and human resources were helpful to meet the outputs/ activities	9	
j. You are committed to continuing the project activities even without donor funding	10	
k. National partners are committed to continuing the Project or elements of the Project without donor funding	11	
l. The training effectively addressed gender-related concerns and considerations.	12	
m. Gender-specific factors influenced the effectiveness of the project	13	

3.13. Did you encounter any significant challenges during the training sessions?

		First Training	Second Training
Yes	1	4	
Partially / Somewhat	2	5	
No	3	6	

3.14. If yes or Partially/ Somewhat, please select the main challenge(s) you faced during the training sessions (you can select multiple)

		Training Session 01	Training Session 02
Lack of understanding of the training content or objectives.	1	18	
Language barriers (such as difficulty understanding the language used in the training)	2	19	
Technical difficulties, (such as problems with internet connectivity or access to required technology)	3	20	
Lack of engagement or interaction - with trainers	4	21	
Lack of engagement - with other participants.	5	22	
Lack of opportunities to ask questions or discuss	6	23	
Feeling overwhelmed by the volume of information / training	7	24	
Feeling overwhelmed by the pace / speed of the training program	8	25	
Personal or health issues impacting participation in the training.	9	26	
Gender-related challenges (such as feeling marginalized or not respected based on gender identity)	10	27	
Feeling marginalized or not respected based on your sexual orientation	11	28	
Cultural barriers (such as differences in learning styles or communication norms)	12	29	
Logistical issues - such as Lack of support for transport to the venue and back	13	30	
scheduling conflicts between training sessions or other activities you were expected to do	14	31	
Difficulty accessing Learning Management Systems - LMS	15	32	
Inadequate organization or coordination of the training event	16	33	
Other (please specify):	17	34	

Training Session 01

Training Session 02

3.15. What could improve in future training programs to enhance the experience and effectiveness for participants like yourself? (open ended)

1

4. overall experience in this programme

4.1. Do you believe the project has played a role in fostering unity and cohesion among youth from diverse backgrounds in Sri Lanka?

Strongly Agree	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Disagree	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.2. How effectively did the project **handle gender dynamics and promote gender equality** and inclusion among participants

Very Effective	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ineffective	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Ineffective	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.3. To what extent did the project contribute to the **personal and professional development** of youth participants?

To a Great Extent	1	<input type="text"/>
To Some Extent	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
To a Little Extent	4	<input type="text"/>
Not at All	5	<input type="text"/>

4.4. To what extent did the project foster **leadership skills and civic engagement** among youth participants?

To a Great Extent	1	<input type="text"/>
To Some Extent	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
To a Little Extent	4	<input type="text"/>
Not at All	5	<input type="text"/>

4.5. How well did the project support the **mental health and well-being** of youth participants?

Very Well	1	<input type="text"/>
Well	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
Poorly	4	<input type="text"/>
Very Poor	5	<input type="text"/>

4.6. Did the project provide opportunities for youth to build **social connections and networks** with peers and mentors?

Yes	1	<input type="text"/>
Partially / Somewhat	2	<input type="text"/>
No	3	<input type="text"/>

4.7. Do you feel there have been changes in **attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions** towards peace and conflict resolution among participants, including yourself?

Yes	1	<input type="text"/>
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Partially / Somewhat	2	<input type="text"/>
No	3	<input type="text"/>

4.8. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience as a youth participant in the project?

Very Satisfied	1	<input type="text"/>
Satisfied	2	<input type="text"/>
Neutral	3	<input type="text"/>
Dissatisfied	4	<input type="text"/>
Very Dissatisfied	5	<input type="text"/>

5. Overall Impact and Policy Engagement

5.1. Have you engaged in any **community development or peacebuilding** activities or initiatives following the training?

Yes	1	<input type="text"/>
No	2	<input type="text"/>

5.2. Have you engaged in any **policy-related activities or initiatives** following the training? (*Impact*)

Yes	1	<input type="text"/>
No	2	<input type="text"/>

5.3. If **yes**, to any of the two questions above, please describe your involvement and the outcomes of your engagement. (Open-ended)

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5.4. If you participated in any peacebuilding activities, did you face any conflicts during your involvement in these activities?

Yes	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.5. If yes, please describe how you resolved the conflicts encountered during your involvement in peacebuilding activities.

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Thank you for your participation.

Annex 02. Proposed In-depth Interview Questions - Participants and Provincial Coordinators

(Note: these questions will be utilized for KIIs with provincial youth coordinators as well)

1. Could you provide a brief description of yourself, please? In particular, for how long have you been engaged in youth politics or community leadership? ***(Start the Discussion)***
2. Have you received any training concerning leadership or youth political engagement before? If so, what were they? Who provided this training (Gov./NGO/other)? ***(Start the Discussion)***
3. Which factors motivated you to apply for this YCLI programme? How did you hear about it? ***(Relevance, Gender Equality and Human Rights)***
 - a. Was your gender identity a determining factor when deciding to apply? ***(Gender Equality)***
 - b. (For participants who did not attend the second training): What were your reasons for not participating in the second training? ***(Relevance)***
 - (Especially for female participants who did not attend the second training) Were there any gendered barriers including care work for not participating in the second training? ***(Gender Equality)***
4. In your experience, what aspects of the programme were most relevant to the needs of young leaders in Sri Lanka? ***(Relevance, Effectiveness)***
 - a. Which component/aspect do you believe is most relevant and useful to you in your work? Why? ***(Relevance)***
 - b. Which component/aspect was the least relevant and helpful in your opinion? Why? How could it be improved? ***(Relevance)***
5. Briefly state your views on the content and quality of the programme (including resource material) and trainers, mentors, community coordinators, other participants etc. ***(Effectiveness, Efficiency, Gender Equality and Human Rights, project management and monitoring)***
 - a. In your opinion, did the composition of participants accurately reflect the demographics and diversity of your community? ***(Inclusion)***
 - b. What is your opinion about the quality of the programme? How could it be improved to be more cost-effective while still achieving its objectives? ***(Relevance, Efficiency)***
 - c. How would you describe your overall engagement in this project starting from training sessions and up to the project implementation? ***(Effectiveness)***
 - d. What do you suggest to improve the overall process to make this peacebuilding effort is realistic? ***(Relevance)***
 - e. What kinds of resources were required to implement these activities? Were those received adequately and in a timely manner? ***(Efficiency)***
 - f. Is there any information you may have liked to have received prior to the programme, which you did not receive? ***(Effectiveness)***

- g. Did you feel the project activities were completed in a timely manner, or were there any unnecessary delays? **(Efficiency)**
 - h. Can you describe any specific instances where a lack of coordination among partners created confusion or inefficiencies? **(Coherence)**
6. Since the programme, have you been able to use the experiences and knowledge gained from the programme in your work? If yes, how? If not, why? **(Effectiveness, Impact)**
 - a. To what extent did the project training and workshops equip you with the skills and knowledge you needed to be effective leaders to promote peace and social-cohesion in your communities? **(Effectiveness)**
 - b. Did the project successfully connect you with opportunities to participate in addressing local challenges in time of promoting peace through community engagement activities? **(Impact)**
 - c. Can you share any examples of unexpected positive or negative outcomes you experienced as a result of your participation in the project? **(Impact)**
 - d. Can you describe any specific challenges you faced in applying the skills and knowledge gained from the project to real-world situations in time of promoting peace? **(Sustainability)**
7. Looking towards the future, what strategies could be adopted to ensure programmes better target and address the needs of young people from diverse backgrounds? **(Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Impact, Project management and monitoring)**
8. In your experience, what aspects of the project had the most significant impact on you as a young leader? **(Impact)**
 - a. what aspects of the project seem most likely to have a lasting impact on promoting social cohesion in your community? **(Impact)**
9. What strategies could be used to ensure that youth leadership and community engagement efforts continue to thrive beyond the project timeframe? **(Sustainability)**
 - a. How confident are you that the skills and knowledge you gained from the project will continue to be useful in promoting social cohesion after the project ends?
(Sustainability)
 - b. Can you think of any specific strategies that could help ensure the initiatives you started in your community (through CNAs or action plans) continue beyond the project timeframe? **(Sustainability)**
 - c. Do you believe the partnerships formed between young leaders, communities, and other stakeholders during the project will be sustained in the long run? Why or why not? **(Sustainability)**
 - d. Can you share any examples of how the project's outcomes are being sustained or replicated in your community to make it more inclusive? **(Sustainability)**
 - e. Are there any ongoing resources or support systems available to help young people continue their work on social cohesion after the project concludes? **(Sustainability)**

10. In your perspective, how successful was the project in integrating gender equality principles throughout its activities? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights)**
 - a. Were there any resources or support systems offered specifically to address the needs of persons with disabilities/ religious minorities who participated in the project? (Inclusion)
 - b. What strategies are needed to ensure that future projects actively promote the inclusion of young women and marginalized youth groups in peacebuilding efforts? (Inclusion)
 - c. How can future projects create a safe and inclusive space for young women to voice their concerns and participate meaningfully in decision-making processes? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights)**

11. Did you feel the project effectively tracked the participation of young women and marginalized youth groups in its activities? **(Monitoring, Gender Equality and Human Rights)**
 - a. Since the program, have you noticed any changes in the way young women and marginalized groups in your community engage in leadership roles or community development efforts? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Impact)**
 - b. Can you describe any challenges you faced in providing feedback to the project staff? **(Project Management and Monitoring)**

Annex 03. Proposed Focus Group Discussion Guiding Questions

1. Could you describe the project that has been implemented by the youth volunteers and leaders in your community? **(Startup the Discussion)**
2. Is it relevant to the needs of the community? Did it respond to a real issue in the community? Why or why not? **(Relevance)**
3. Can you share any examples of how the project could have been more effective in engaging young people from different backgrounds? **(Effectiveness)**
4. Can you share any examples of how the project could have made better use of its resources? **(Efficiency)**
5. Did you observe any instances where project resources seemed to be wasted or underutilized in your community? **(Efficiency)**
6. Do you feel the project had a significant impact on the community? Why or why not? **(Impact)**
7. Can you share any examples of how the project empowered young people in your communities to contribute to social cohesion efforts? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Diversity & Inclusion)**
8. Do you believe that the project's positive outcomes will continue after the project is finished? Explain your reasoning. **(Sustainability)**
 - a. Are there any concerns about the sustainability of the project's outcomes in the long term? Please explain.
9. Can you share any examples of how the project helped to empower young women or youth from marginalized groups in your community to take on leadership roles? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights)**
10. How can future projects create a more supportive environment for youth leadership and volunteerism in your communities? **(Project management and monitoring, Gender Equality and Human Rights)**
 - a. (If the responses reflect gender barriers to participation) How can future projects ensure equal opportunities for all genders in youth leadership and volunteerism?

Annex 04. Proposed KII guiding questions

For project implementers

1. In your perspective, how relevant were the project's activities and capacity-building efforts to the needs and priorities of young leaders in Sri Lanka? **(Relevance)**
2. How did the project integrate the Healthy Settings Approach into activities in a way that was relevant and addressed the specific health and well-being concerns of Sri Lankan communities? **(Relevance)**
 - a. How healthy settings approach were effective in mitigating potential health risks in participating communities and/or contributing to building capacity for managing health emergencies at local and national levels? **(Relevance-SDG-3.d: Health Risk Management)**
 - b. How healthy settings approach help in creating lasting partnerships or coordination mechanisms for future joint efforts in health security? **(Relevance-SDG 16.7: Participation)**
3. To what extent were the key elements of the ToC (e.g., equipping youth, collaboration, healthy settings approach) successfully implemented over the project period? (ToC) **(Relevance)**
4. Did the project encounter any unforeseen challenges or adaptations to the ToC during implementation? If Yes, Please Describe. (ToC) **(Relevance)**
5. Can you please explain the selection criteria of implementing partners, considering the expertise, experience, and resources to deliver the project activities and achieve the desired outcomes successfully? **(Relevance)**
6. Please elaborate on the selection criteria for project beneficiaries and how they align with project objectives. **(Relevance)**
7. How did the project ensure clear communication and coordination among all consortium partners (WHO, UNDP, UNV, NYSC)? **(Coherence, Project management and monitoring)**
 - a. What is the rationale behind the decision for the collaboration of WHO, UNDP and UNV to implement this project? **(Relevance)**
 - b. In your experience, how effectively did the consortium (WHO, UNDP, UNV, NYSC) leverag to build upon and enhance existing synergies and interlinkages based on the unique strengths and expertise of each partner to create a more coherent and impactful approach to promoting youth leadership and social cohesion? **(Effectiveness, Coherence)**
8. How effectively did the project reach its target groups of young leaders and community members? **(Effectiveness)**
9. How did the project ensure efficient allocation of resources (human, technical and financial) across different project activities? **(Efficiency)**
 - a. What types of resources were required to implement these activities? Were those received adequately and on time? **(Efficiency)**

- b. Were there any challenges encountered in managing project resources effectively? E.g.: delays, inadequate allocations due to resource limitations etc. and how were these challenges addressed? **(Efficiency)**
10. What were the most significant changes observed in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of the youth leaders and volunteers as a result of the project? **(Impact)**
 - a. How did the project contribute to building the capacity of local communities and organizations to promote social cohesion beyond the project lifespan? **(Impact)**
 - b. How did the project incorporate the Healthy Settings Approach into ongoing community initiatives to ensure its long-term impact on community well-being and what immediate changes were observed? **(Impact, Sustainability)**
11. Is there an exit strategy for the project? How do you ensure continuity of your efforts? **(Sustainability)**
 - a. Describe the strategies used to strengthen partnerships and collaboration among project stakeholders for long-term engagement. **(Sustainability, Indirect: Coherence)**
 - b. In your perspective, how likely are the project's contributions to social cohesion to be sustained in the long run? Give reasons. **(Sustainability)**
12. Did the Project address and respond to existing power dynamics and gender relations? Please give examples. How could this have been done better? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights)**
 - a. To what extent were women and other marginalized groups involved in the implementing teams, not just as beneficiaries and target groups? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Inclusion)**
 - b. How did the project address the specific needs and challenges faced by young women and marginalized youth groups? **(Relevance, Gender Equality and Human Rights)**
 - c. Describe the strategies used to ensure the project design and implementation were inclusive of gender equality, youth volunteering, diversity considerations. **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Diversity & Inclusion)**
 - d. Specifically, were women included in decision-making processes? If so, how often and at what level of involvement? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Project Management & Monitoring)**
 - e. Can you share any examples of how the Healthy Settings Approach was adapted to consider the gendered aspects of health and well-being in communities? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Impact)**
13. How did the project ensure its monitoring and evaluation systems captured data on the participation of young women and marginalized youth groups? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Project management and monitoring)**
 - a. Describe the strategies used to monitor and evaluate the integration of cross-cutting issues (gender equality, youth volunteering, persons with disability,

minority inclusion) throughout the project cycle. ***(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Inclusion, Project management and monitoring)***

14. Can you describe any challenges encountered in ensuring the project remained relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of communities throughout its implementation and was impactful and sustainable beyond the lifespan of the project? ***(Challenges related to Relevance, Impact, and Sustainability)***
 - a. Did the project encounter any unforeseen challenges or circumstances that required adjustments to the strategy? ***(Challenges related to Relevance, Efficiency)***
15. What best practices emerged from the project implementation that could be replicated in other projects/ programmes in the future? ***(Project Management & Monitoring)***
16. What lessons can be learned from the project implementation to improve performance, results, and effectiveness in the future? ***(Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Project management and monitoring)***
 - a. Were there any unexpected positive or negative outcomes of this project?
 - b. Looking back, are there any adjustments you would have made to the project design or activities to enhance their overall relevance and impact?

For resource persons/service providers

1. Could you please explain how you/your organization is engaged with the YCLI project? Have you/ your organization engaged in youth political participation and engagement-related work before? If so, in what capacity? **(Relevance, Coherence)**
2. What are your views on the contracting process? Were there any delays? Were the delays explained to your satisfaction? **(Project management and monitoring)**
3. What types of resources were required to implement these activities? Were those received adequately and in a timely manner? **(Effectiveness, Efficiency)**
4. What are your views on the management of project resources? What could be improved? **(Efficiency)**
5. How were the training modules developed? Will those be used in future trainings? **(Effectiveness, Sustainability)**
6. How effective was the technical advisory committee? **(Effectiveness, project management and monitoring)**
7. What are your views on the quality of the resource material/ trainers/ format of training? Were there any concerns? How did/do you propose to address those concerns? Is there space for development? **(Effectiveness)**
8. What outcomes do you anticipate through these trainings? **(Impact)**
9. Are you aware of any changes observed in the youth participants since the training? i.e. Has the training had a positive/negative impact? If positive, how do you ensure it is sustainable? **(Impact, Sustainability)**
10. What were some of the main challenges in implementing these respective activities? **(Across all criteria)**
11. What lessons can be learned from the project implementation to improve performance, results and effectiveness in the future? **(Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Project management and monitoring)**
12. What best practices emerged from the project implementation that could be replicated in other projects/ programmes in the future? **(Project Management and Monitoring)**

For CSO partners

1. Could you please explain how you/your organization is engaged with the YCLI project? Have you/your organization engaged in youth political participation and engagement-related work before? If so, in what capacity? **(Relevance, Coherence)**
2. In your perspective, how relevant were the project's activities and capacity-building efforts to the needs and priorities of young leaders in Sri Lanka? **(Relevance)**
 - a. Did you feel the project activities effectively addressed the needs and challenges identified during the Community Needs Assessments (CNAs)? **(Relevance)**
 - b. In your experience, how effective were the youth-led action plans in addressing the needs identified during the community needs assessments? **(Relevance)**
3. How did the project ensure clear communication and coordination among all consortium partners (WHO, UNDP, UNV, NYSC, Sarvodaya, and Seva Lanka)? **(Coherence)**
 - a. In your experience, how effectively did the consortium (WHO, UNDP, UNV, NYSC) leverage the unique strengths and expertise of each partner to create a more coherent and impactful approach to promoting youth leadership and social cohesion? **(Effectiveness, Coherence, Indirect: Efficiency)**
4. How effectively did the project reach its target groups of young leaders and community members? **(Effectiveness)**
5. How well did the capacity-building training provided to youth leaders translate into effective interventions within your community? **(Effectiveness, Impact)**
6. What types of resources were required to implement these activities? Were those received adequately and on time? **(Efficiency)**
 - a. What are your views on the management of project resources? What could be improved? **(Efficiency)**
 - b. Did you observe any instances where project resources seemed to be wasted or underutilized in your community? **(Efficiency)**
7. Have you observed any lasting changes in the way young people engage with community development efforts since the project? **(Impact)**
8. Do you anticipate any challenges in sustaining the community initiatives or action plans developed through the project's involvement? Explain. **(Sustainability)**
9. In your opinion, how can partnerships between young people and CBOs be strengthened to ensure the continued pursuit of social cohesion goals? **(Coherence)**
10. Did you observe any changes in attitudes or norms related to gender equality within your community as a result of the project? **(Gender Equality and Human Rights, Diversity & Inclusion)**

11. Did you feel the project kept you informed about the results of its monitoring and evaluation activities? **(Project management and monitoring)**
12. Can you describe any challenges encountered in ensuring the project remained relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of communities throughout its implementation and was impactful and sustainable beyond the lifespan of the project? **(Across all criteria)**
 - a. Did the project encounter any unforeseen challenges or circumstances that required adjustments to the strategy?
13. What best practices emerged from the project implementation that could be replicated in other projects/ programmes in the future? **(Project Management & Monitoring)**
14. What lessons can be learned from the project implementation to improve performance, results, and effectiveness in the future? **(Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Project management and monitoring)**
 - a. Were there any unexpected positive or negative outcomes of this project?
 - b. Looking back, are there any adjustments you would have made to the project design or activities to enhance their overall relevance and impact?

Annex 05. List of Interviewees

Table 5. List of Interviewees

Interviewee	Interviewee Category	Organization	Relevance to Project
Mr. Gayan Rajapakse	Resource Person/Trainer	N/A	Designed and delivered training modules on Collective Leadership and Sustainable Development Goals.
Mr. Suchith Abeywickrama	Resource Person/Trainer	N/A	Designed and delivered training modules on Responsible Leadership and Problem-Solving Skills for Leaders. Also served on the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).
Mr. Aloka Gunasekara	Resource Person/Trainer	N/A	Designed and delivered training modules on Community Needs Assessments (CNAs).
Mr. Indrasiri Weganthalawatte	Resource Person/Trainer	University of Sri Jayewardene pura	Designed and delivered training modules on Social Cohesion and the Do No Harm Approach.
Mr. Zihan Zarouk	Resource Person/Trainer	UNDP Capacity Development for Local Government (CDLG)	Delivered training modules on Documenting Community Interventions and facilitated youth participation from the CDLG project. Also involved with the establishment of the Community Volunteer Center at UVA Wellassa University.
Mr. Lakshitha Prasad	Provincial Coordinator	UNV	North Central Province Coordinator, responsible for participant recruitment, training coordination, and community project support.
Mr. Shehan K. Kannangara	Provincial Coordinator	UNV	Southern Province Coordinator, responsible for participant recruitment,

Interviewee	Interviewee Category	Organization	Relevance to Project
			training coordination, and community project support.
Ms. Thisarani Siriwardana	Provincial Coordinator	UNV	Central Province Coordinator, responsible for participant recruitment, training coordination, and community project support.
Mr. Rasika Geethanage	CSO Representative	Sarvodaya Shanthi Seva Padanama	Facilitated youth participant selection, provided support for CNAs and community projects, and managed financial disbursements in 15 districts.
Ms. Kaushalya Navaratne	CSO Representative	Seva Lanka	Facilitated youth participant selection, provided support for CNAs and community projects, and managed financial disbursements in 10 districts.
Mr. Fawaz (Founder) & Ms. Hudah (Project Manager for YCLI Project)	Service Provider	Curve Up Pvt Ltd.	Contracted for overall project implementation, including training module design and development, resource person recruitment, logistics management, and production of training materials, websites, and the Learning Management System (LMS).
Mr. Noyalganth Rajkumar	Project Lead	WHO	Responsible for overall project implementation, coordination between agencies, and monitoring progress.
Mr. Varuna Ponnampereuma	Project Lead	UNV	Responsible for volunteer management, community engagement, and implementation of project activities.
Dr. Priyan Seneviratne	Project Lead	UNDP	Lead on peacebuilding aspects, was involved in the selection of CSO partners, and provided

Interviewee	Interviewee Category	Organization	Relevance to Project
			oversight and guidance for project implementation
Ms. Sadhani Rajapakse	Project Lead/Technical Validation	WHO	National Professional Officer for Psychosocial Wellbeing, involved in project design, training module development, and technical oversight.
Mr. Rashitha Delapola	Public Official	National Youth Services Council (NYSC)	Director (Technical & Vocational Training) at NYSC, responsible for coordinating project activities with the government, providing logistical support, and ensuring the integration of project outputs into NYSC programs.
Mr. Namal Bandarage	Youth Participant	N/A	Participant in the YCLI training program and a team leader for a community project focusing on hospital renovation in Galaboda Village.

Annex 06. Evaluation Framework

The following broad questions are explored for the evaluation:

Table 6. Evaluation Criteria / Framework

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
<p>Relevance: the extent to which the project has contributed to addressing the needs identified in its design</p>	<p>a) Were the project's objectives, Theory of Change and Intervention strategies relevant to the needs and priorities of youth within the context of Sri Lanka over the period of 2021-2023?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was the project activities in-line with the strategic goals outlined in the Theory of Change (ToC) framework of this project? - How relevant are the project activities to the outcome and outputs in the results framework of the project? <p>b) How relevant was the targeting and selection of implementing partners and youth groups reached through this project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were the right beneficiaries selected that helped achieve the project objectives? - How appropriate was the selection process for implementing partners and the youth groups engaged in this project? - What was the support received from implementing partners under this project? - Was such support identified as necessary for the project beneficiaries to deliver expected services? - How relevant was such support to promote youth political participation and engagement?
<p>Coherence: the extent to which the project addresses synergies and interlinkages between the work carried out by WHO, UNDP, UNV</p>	<p>a) Did this intervention establish synergies and interlinkages with other interventions which have similar objectives carried out by WHO, UNDP, UNV and relevant Government/non-government development partners?</p> <p>Was there a clear demonstration of the intervention fostering existing synergies and</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
and NYSC.	<p>interlinkages with other initiatives sharing similar objectives, as carried out by WHO, UNDP, UNV, and pertinent government/non-government development partners?</p> <p>b) What were the comparative advantages of WHO, UNDP, and UNV in implementing this project? How well did the partner agencies coordinate, jointly-plan, and jointly implement to ensure coherence?</p>
<p>Effectiveness: the extent to which the project has implemented its major activities targeting the beneficiaries to reach output and outcome-level results</p>	<p>c) How effectively did the project reach its target groups?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Did any gender-specific factors influence the project's effectiveness?</p> <p>d) To what extent was the project's overall planned results achieved at output and outcome levels?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">What factors influenced achievement or non-achievement of the results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How far did the project beneficiaries supported by the project achieve expected results? <p>e) To what extent did the Project make timely adjustments to its strategy to maintain its relevance and effectiveness?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What extraneous events influenced the project activities during the project implementation period? - Did project activities have to be changed to respond to new circumstances? - What was the impact of the changes to the project activities on the expected outcomes? <p>f) Were there any unexpected results or unintended consequences of the results (both positive and negative)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the unexpected positive results of the project activities? - How will those contribute to youth political

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
	<p>representation and engagement in Sri Lanka?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the unexpected negative results of the project activities? - What lessons were learned to mitigate those unexpected negative results? <p>g) To what extent did the output level interventions translate into progress towards outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How far could the project beneficiaries meet the output level interventions? - How far did the achievements of the output level interventions contribute to the outcome level? <p>h) Did the project achieve its intended gender-related outcomes?</p>
<p>Efficiency: the extent to which the project resources were managed well in proportion to the results achieved</p>	<p>a) Have financial, technical and human resources been allocated sufficiently and strategically to achieve project outputs/ outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did the project beneficiaries receive financial resources sufficiently? - Did the project beneficiaries receive financial resources in a timely manner? - If financial resources were insufficient, how was the deficit addressed? - How efficiently did this project deliver technical support to its beneficiaries? - What measures were taken to ensure better provision of technical support and minimize resource limitations? - Have technical resources, including expertise and skills, been allocated sufficiently and strategically to achieve project outputs/outcomes?

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were human resources needed for all project activities identified? - Was there any Human Resources development during the project period? - How helpful were the available financial resources to meet the outputs and outcomes? - How helpful were the available Human resources to meet the outputs and outcomes? <p>b) Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner? If not, why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was it possible to deliver the outputs in a timely manner? - Were there any challenges to deliver the outputs in a timely manner? - What measures were taken to resolve these challenges? <p>c) How has the project ensured value for money through the use of the most cost-efficient methodologies to achieve planned results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To which extent was the finances available for the project activities helpful to achieve impact made by the project? - What are the activities that may not have happened if finances were not available for the project beneficiaries?
<p>Impact: the extent to which the project has achieved measurable change based on planned results</p>	<p>a) Did the intervention reinforce existing discrimination and power structures or was it transformative? In which way/s?</p> <p>What was the differential impact of the project on young men and women (including any changes in gender roles, power dynamics, or access to</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
	<p>opportunities)?</p> <p>b) What are the most significant changes achieved through this project for youth?</p>
<p>Sustainability: the extent to which the project has potential for sustainability</p>	<p>a) How were local and national capacities changed through this project?</p>
	<p>b) How resilient are the project's outcomes, and will they sustain beyond the project lifespan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are national partners committed to continuing the Project or elements of the Project? - Have national partners displayed willingness and intention to continue the Project or elements of the Project? - What are the project activities that can continue without donor funding?
	<p>c) What partnerships/relationships were built through the project, and will they contribute to the sustainability of the project results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are any mechanisms developed and/or interventions linked with existing mechanisms at local and national levels to ensure sustainability? - What project interventions could be transferred to the state? - What are the opportunities available within the state to accommodate those interventions? - Have CSOs made attempts to link them with the state?
	<p>d) To what extent is there evidence that capacities, knowledge, relationships, mechanisms and systems established through this project are sustainable and would continue to contribute to social cohesion beyond the project duration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What resource capacities were developed during the project? - How can those capacities be used in future interventions?

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what ways can those capacities be utilized to promote youth political participation and engagement in future interventions?
<p>Gender Equality and Human Rights: the extent to which the project has integrated gender, disability and human rights into the program design and implementation</p>	<p>a) To what extent did the project actively identify and include marginalised and excluded youth groups and ensure disability inclusion during the design and implementation of activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the project beneficiaries taken geographically or ethnically or socially marginalized or excluded communities into account in their activities? - What were the challenges project beneficiaries faced when including these marginalized or excluded communities in their activities? <p>b) Was there an effort to involve young men / young women equally? Does the project address harmful gender norms and/or facilitate the transformation of gender roles that can contribute to peacebuilding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What mechanisms were used to identify and reach out to marginalized groups for participation in project activities? - Did the project engage with any local organizations or networks working on gender equality, disability rights, and human rights to ensure inclusive participation? - Have the project beneficiaries responded to gender related concerns through their activities? - Did the project implement measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, discrimination, and harassment within project settings? - What were the challenges project beneficiaries faced when responding to gender related concerns?

Evaluation Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What achievements did project beneficiaries make in terms of responding to gender related concerns?
Project Management and Monitoring	a) How effective were the project's monitoring and evaluation strategies to inform decision-making?
	b) How effective was the project's results framework to measure results?

Annex 07. Evaluation Team Composition

The principal activity of the Marga Institute is the study and critical evaluation of past and ongoing development processes in Sri Lanka. It approaches and analyses development as a process and as a condition in which economic growth, social equity, political freedom and participation are integrally linked and must reinforce one another. Its programme of research, therefore, covers three main areas of development- economic, social and political. Consequently, it draws on a wide range of social science disciplines and brings a multi-disciplinary approach to its work.

With a non-partisan and ideologically open outlook and contextual framework, since its inception, the Institute has recognised the need to consider national issues in the wider context of regional concerns and global changes. As a result, over the years, Marga has established strong links with like-minded individuals and institutions both in the Asian region and at the international level.

The team led by Marga comprises individuals with extensive expertise and experience of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodologies, encompassing skills in qualitative and quantitative data analysis and participatory data collection approaches. They have demonstrated proficiency in local languages, and familiarity and prior experience in aligning their work with the policies and guidelines of the UN and comparable development agencies. Furthermore, they possess knowledge of national and local contexts, governance systems, and relevant legal and policy frameworks.

Table 7. Evaluation Team

Team member	Role	Responsibilities
Mr Khandoker Nazrul Islam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Development Studies-MDS (Khulna University, Bangladesh) ● Master's in philosophy (National University, Bangladesh) ● Cost and Management Accountancy, ICMA, Bangladesh 	International Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Desk Review and analysis of documents and reports ● Developing the evaluation design and tools ● Preparation of the Inception and Final Reports
Ms Menaka Lecamwasam	National Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assisting in the Desk Review and analysis ● Assisting in the development of the evaluation design and tools

Team member	Role	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Laws (Human Rights) with Distinction The University of Hong Kong, (2013) ● Bachelor of Laws, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka (2010) ● Final examination for Attorneys- at- Law, 2nd class Honours (2010) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct selected IDI/KIIs ● Provide technical input for the preparation of the Inception and Final Reports
<p>Mr. Piyasena Ranepura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Economics of Development, Australian National University, Canberra, 1995/96 ● Post Graduate Diploma in Economics of Development, Australian National University, Canberra, 1994/95 ● MA in Development Studies 1989 ● Post Graduate Diploma in Economic Development, University of Colombo, 1985/86 	Co-National Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assisting in the Desk Review and analysis ● Conduct selected IDI/KIIs ● Provide technical input for the preparation of the Inception and Final Reports
<p>Ms. Dharini Priscilla</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bsc (Hons) In Psychology (First Class), Cardiff Metropolitan University 	Gender Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advise the project team for data collection and Provide gender analysis of project outcomes.
<p>Mr. Ranjith de Silva</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Arts in Demography, (Colombo), 2013 ● Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Statistics, 1994 ● Bachelor of Science, 1985 (University of Ruhuna) 	Data analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct Data Analysis and provide the analysis for the project reports
<p>Mr. Hasitha Jayasinghe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MBA (PIM-SJP), 2016 ● CIMA, Exams complete, 2011 	Project coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate Project Activities and Communications
<p>Ms. Nethmini Gunarathna</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MFE- Financial Economics (Colombo), 2023 	Field coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate all necessary interviews with stakeholders in Sinhala.

Annex 08. Evaluation of Community Action Plans of 6 Community Projects

This section presents an evaluation of six of the seven community projects implemented by young people following their participation in the YCLI Project

The implementation of Community Action Plans (CAPs), also referred to as community projects or seed grant-based projects, represents a crucial phase of the YCLI project. These projects provided a platform for youth participants to apply their learnings from the training program, engage with their communities, and contribute to addressing local needs.

Analysis of the six FGD reports reveals a mixed picture of success, highlighting both the potential and the challenges of youth-led community development initiatives.

The reports below offer insights into the projects' implementation, achievements, challenges, and recommendations for future initiatives. They highlight the potential of empowered youth to drive positive change while offering valuable lessons for strengthening youth-led development programs.

Focus Group Discussion Report

Project Title: Culture Café

Location: Eastern Province

1. Introduction

Project Background (The Planned Community Action Plan): The Cultural Café initiative sought to address the persistent lack of understanding between communities in the Eastern Province, even 15 years after the war. It aimed to mobilize youth from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds to promote cultural appreciation and tolerance through shared experiences like food, music, and art.

Project Implementation (Activities Implemented): The project involved youth from multiple communities participating in a mobile café concept. They visited five areas within the Eastern Province, sharing aspects of their cultures with each other and community members. One notable example was the visit of youths from Komarankadawala to Mavilankathurai, where they learned about different lifestyles and traditions.

2. Evaluation

- **Relevance: Strong** - Participants strongly agreed that the project addressed a real need in the community by promoting cultural understanding and tolerance.
- **Coherence: Moderate** - The project's activities generally aligned with its goals. However, the focus on showcasing cultural elements rather than addressing historical and social contexts limited the depth of understanding achieved.
- **Effectiveness: Moderate** - While the project facilitated some positive cultural exchange, participants indicated that its impact was limited by its short-term nature.
- **Efficiency: Moderate** - Participants felt resources were used well, but the project's limited timeframe and scope prevented it from fully achieving its objectives.
- **Impact: Moderate** - The project had a positive impact on participant understanding and interaction. However, the lack of sustainability raises concerns about the long-term impact.

- **Sustainability: Weak** - The project's short duration and lack of follow-up plans limited its sustainability.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights: Moderate** - The project encouraged diverse participation but lacked a specific focus on women and youth empowerment.
- **Project Management and Monitoring: Moderate** - While the youth team was dedicated, the project would benefit from stronger monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and impact.

3. Conclusions

What Went Well: The project successfully engaged young people in promoting cultural exchange and fostering positive interactions between communities.

What Can Be Improved: The project's impact could be enhanced by addressing its short-term nature, incorporating critical discussions about historical and social contexts, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

4. Recommendations for Future Projects

- Secure ongoing funding and support to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Integrate discussions about historical and social contexts into cultural sharing activities.
- Dedicate resources to women and youth empowerment initiatives.
- Implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system with data collection and analysis.

Focus Group Discussion Report

Project Title: Community Arena

Location: Benthara

1. Introduction

Project Background (The Planned Community Action Plan): This youth-led initiative aimed to empower young people and promote interfaith harmony in Benthara and Darga Town. It initially focused on a street food venture near Bentara Bridge as a means to provide entrepreneurial skills and foster interfaith interaction.

Project Implementation (Activities Implemented):

Phase 1: Twenty participants from diverse backgrounds received training in business development.

Phase 2: Due to unforeseen challenges, the project shifted focus. Participants visited Akurana in Kandy, engaging in interfaith dialogue with different religious groups.

Phase 3: The project concluded with discussions on promoting interfaith harmony, where participants shared experiences and insights.

2. Evaluation

- **Relevance: Moderate** - The initial focus on entrepreneurship addressed a community need, with one participant successfully starting a business. The shift to interfaith dialogue, while prompted by challenges, aligned with broader project goals.

- **Coherence: Limited** - The project faced coherence challenges due to the location change. However, the refocused approach to interfaith dialogue in Akurana improved coherence with overall goals.
- **Effectiveness: Strong** - The project effectively fostered interfaith understanding and engagement among participants through discussions and shared experiences in Akurana.
- **Efficiency: Moderate** - The project adapted to challenges, demonstrating resourcefulness. However, the need to shift focus due to resistance from some community members and officials suggests the potential for planning improvements.
- **Impact: Moderate** - The project fostered positive interethnic relationships and led to ongoing collaborations, demonstrating a positive impact on social cohesion.
- **Sustainability: Moderate** - While the project led to individual entrepreneurial endeavors and collaborations, continued leadership and resource support are needed to maintain momentum.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights: Strong** - The project actively engaged young women and marginalized groups, promoting equal participation and leadership.
- **Project Management and Monitoring: Moderate** - The project demonstrated adaptability but highlighted the need for robust contingency planning and structured monitoring mechanisms.

3. Conclusions

What Went Well: The project effectively fostered interfaith dialogue and empowered youth from diverse backgrounds to collaborate. It also demonstrated adaptability in facing challenges.

What Can Be Improved: Implementing stronger contingency planning, developing more robust monitoring systems, and securing long-term resources will enhance the project's sustainability and impact.

4. Recommendations for Future Projects

- Develop detailed contingency plans to address potential challenges.
- Implement structured monitoring mechanisms to track progress and measure impact.
- Secure ongoing resource support to sustain positive outcomes and collaborations.
- Document and share the project's adaptability and interfaith dialogue strategies with other youth groups.

Focus Group Discussion Report

Project Title: Hospital Renovation at Galaboda Village

Location: Central Province

1. Introduction

Project Background (The Planned Community Action Plan): This youth-led initiative aimed to improve healthcare access in Galaboda Village by renovating the village hospital, particularly focusing on creating a more functional space for pregnant women and mothers with babies.

Project Implementation (Activities Implemented):

- **Phase 1 (Youth-led):** The youth team successfully repaired the damaged hospital roof and made initial improvements to the interior.
- **Phase 2 (Contracted):** Due to internal team issues, further renovations were outsourced to contractors. This phase faced significant challenges, including delays, miscommunication, and potential misuse of project funds.

2. Evaluation

- **Relevance: Strong** - The project directly addressed a crucial community need for improved healthcare facilities, especially for mothers and babies.
- **Coherence: Strong** - The project's goal of renovating the hospital aligned directly with the community's need for better healthcare access.
- **Effectiveness: Mixed** - The youth-led initial phase was highly effective. However, the contracted phase was ineffective due to contractor issues, compromising the project's overall impact.
- **Efficiency: Mixed** - The youth-led phase was efficient in resource use. In contrast, the contracted phase suffered from mismanagement and an inability to complete the work as planned.
- **Impact: Mixed** - The initial phase positively impacted healthcare access for mothers. However, the incomplete renovation hinders the hospital's full potential.
- **Sustainability: Weak** - The stalled renovation and lack of contractor accountability raise concerns about the project's long-term sustainability.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights: Moderate** - The project involved both male and female youth volunteers, but there's room to further empower women in leadership roles.
- **Project Management and Monitoring: Weak** - The project highlighted challenges with contractor selection, communication, accountability, and financial transparency.

3. Conclusions

What Went Well: The project effectively engaged the community and demonstrated the commitment of youth volunteers during the initial renovation phase.

What Can Be Improved: Strengthened contractor oversight, clearer contracts, improved communication, financial transparency, and continuous community engagement are crucial for improvement.

4. Recommendations for Future Projects

- Implement a rigorous contractor selection process, focusing on experience and commitment.
- Establish clear contracts with milestones, accountability measures, and effective communication channels.
- Prioritize financial transparency and documentation for all project expenses.
- Ensure continuous community engagement and feedback throughout all project stages.

Focus Group Discussion Report

Project Title: Aswenna

Location: Doragala Village, Central Province

1. Introduction

Project Background (The Planned Community Action Plan): This project aimed to address two key needs in Doragala Village: water scarcity and limited economic opportunities. The plan involved installing a water pump for the village school and introducing greenhouse technology for capsicum cultivation.

Project Implementation (Activities Implemented): The water pump installation was completed successfully. However, the greenhouse project encountered significant challenges due to inadequate planning, lack of coordination, limited participation, and knowledge gaps among project members.

2. Evaluation

- **Relevance: Mixed** - The water project was highly relevant, directly addressing the school's water needs. The greenhouse project, while addressing food security and economic diversification, was ultimately less relevant due to its lack of success.
- **Coherence: Mixed** - The water project demonstrated good coherence, effectively addressing a critical need. The greenhouse project lacked coherence due to poor planning and limited community alignment.
- **Effectiveness: Mixed** - The water project proved highly effective, providing a sustainable solution for the school's water needs. The greenhouse project was ineffective due to planning and knowledge gaps.
- **Efficiency: Mixed** - The water project demonstrated high efficiency in resource utilization. In contrast, the greenhouse project was inefficient due to poor planning and wasted resources.
- **Impact: Mixed** - The water project positively impacted the village school and student well-being. The greenhouse project, due to its failure, had a negligible impact.
- **Sustainability: Mixed** - The water project is considered highly sustainable due to its infrastructure and community training. The greenhouse project's sustainability is uncertain due to its dependence on planning and knowledge.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights: Mixed** - While female youth participated in the water project, their absence from the greenhouse project raises concerns about inclusivity and potential gender-based barriers.
- **Project Management and Monitoring: Mixed** - The water project demonstrated strong project management. The greenhouse project suffered from poor planning, coordination, and a lack of monitoring mechanisms.

3. Conclusions

What Went Well: The water project successfully addressed a critical need and highlighted the effectiveness of well-planned community initiatives.

What Can Be Improved: Future projects should prioritize comprehensive planning, knowledge sharing, and community engagement throughout all stages.

4. Recommendations for Future Projects

- Conduct thorough feasibility studies and develop comprehensive plans before implementation.
- Invest in training and knowledge-sharing initiatives for project members.
- Prioritize community engagement and ownership throughout the project lifecycle.
- Implement robust monitoring mechanisms to track progress and ensure accountability.
- Actively address gender-based barriers and promote inclusivity in all project activities.

Focus Group Discussion Report

Project Title: E-Cane

Location: Gampaha, Western Province

1. Introduction

- **Project Background (The Planned Community Action Plan):** This project aimed to support cane producers in Radawadunna Village by creating a digital platform for selling their products, expanding their market reach, and improving livelihoods. The intended platform was Daraz, but the project ultimately did not achieve this integration.
- **Project Implementation (Activities Implemented):** The project provided training and workshops to enhance the community's skills in cane product development and marketing. However, it faced challenges related to raw material shortages, community engagement, and fully realizing the digital marketplace aspect.

2. Evaluation

- **Relevance: Moderate** - While the project addressed the community's need for market access, it faced challenges in fully meeting the needs related to raw materials and digital platform integration.
- **Coherence: Moderate** - The project's activities aligned with its overall goals, but the disconnect between the community's needs (raw materials) and the project's focus (digital sales) impacted coherence.
- **Effectiveness: Moderate** - The project had mixed effectiveness. While some participants found buyers, others prioritized obtaining low-cost raw materials, highlighting a misalignment with the project's sales focus.
- **Efficiency: Moderate** - The project efficiently utilized resources for training and skill development. However, the lack of a thorough needs assessment led to addressing needs (digital sales) that were not the primary concern for all community members.
- **Impact: Moderate** - The project positively impacted participants' leadership and soft skills, which benefited their interactions with customers. However, the impact on overall economic benefits was limited.

- **Sustainability: Moderate** - The project's sustainability relies on the continued success of the participant who secured orders through the Good Market. The impact on the broader community's sustainability is less clear.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights: Not Assessed** - The report doesn't provide specific information on the project's impact on gender equality. It does note a generational divide regarding interest in traditional crafts.
- **Project Management and Monitoring: Weak** - The lack of a community needs assessment and a formal project evaluation limited the project's ability to measure impact and ensure alignment with community priorities.

3. Conclusions

- **What Went Well:** The project successfully provided training and skills development that benefited participants.
- **What Can Be Improved:** Conducting a needs assessment, ensuring better alignment with community needs, and providing ongoing support for raw material access are crucial for improvement.

4. Recommendations for Future Projects

- Conduct a thorough community needs assessment before project design and implementation.
- Explore alternative solutions, such as collective bargaining for raw materials or establishing a local supply chain.
- Provide ongoing support and mentorship to participants beyond the project's timeframe.
- Consider incorporating financial literacy training to assist with business management and growth.

Focus Group Discussion Report

Project Title: Water for Siyanethu Village

Location: Tissamaharama, Southern Province

1. Introduction

- **Project Background (The Planned Community Action Plan):** This project aimed to address the lack of clean water and sanitation in Siyanethu Village, a community with a significant population of visually impaired individuals. The goal was to improve water access, sanitation, and human security for all residents.
- **Project Implementation (Activities Implemented):**
 - A Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was conducted.
 - A water tower and filtering system were installed to provide clean drinking water.
 - Community training on water system maintenance was provided.
 - A village society was formed to manage the water project collaboratively.

2. Evaluation

- **Relevance: Strong** - The project addressed a critical need for clean water, directly impacting the health and well-being of the community, particularly the visually impaired.
- **Coherence: Strong** - The project's activities directly aligned with the community's identified needs, showing a clear understanding of the local context.
- **Effectiveness: Moderate** - The project initially effectively provided clean water. However, the malfunctioning filter has reduced its effectiveness, highlighting the importance of ongoing maintenance.
- **Efficiency: Moderate** - The project efficiently used limited resources to install the water system. However, the lack of resources for repairs and ongoing maintenance poses a challenge to its long-term efficiency.
- **Impact: Moderate** - The project initially had a positive impact on community health. However, the broken filter has limited its long-term impact and highlights the need for sustainable solutions.
- **Sustainability: Weak** - The project's sustainability is a concern due to insufficient resources for repairs and a lack of skilled personnel for maintenance.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights: Not Fully Assessed** - While the report doesn't provide specific data, it highlights an opportunity to empower women and individuals with disabilities in project management and decision-making.
- **Project Management and Monitoring: Moderate** - While the project effectively identified community needs and provided training, it lacked a formal monitoring system and faced challenges with resource limitations and sustained community engagement.

3. Conclusions

- **What Went Well:** The project successfully addressed an immediate need for clean water and demonstrated effective community engagement during the initial phases.
- **What Can Be Improved:** Securing long-term funding, strengthening community ownership, and implementing a robust monitoring system are crucial for improvement.

4. Recommendations for Future Projects

- Explore and secure sustainable funding mechanisms for ongoing maintenance and repairs.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to strengthen community engagement, ownership, and leadership.
- Provide regular training and capacity building for community members, especially those with disabilities.
- Establish a formal monitoring system to track progress, identify challenges, and assess impact.

Section Conclusion

This evaluation of six community projects reveals both the significant potential and the inherent complexities of youth-led development initiatives. The projects demonstrate that with adequate

training, mentorship, and resources, young people can effectively address community needs and drive positive change. However, the challenges encountered highlight the critical importance of thorough planning, needs assessment, community engagement, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. By strengthening these areas, future youth development programs can better equip young leaders to implement sustainable and impactful community-driven solutions.

Key Recommendations for Future Initiatives:

- **Prioritize Sustainability from the Outset**
Integrate sustainability planning into the project design phase, ensuring that community projects are designed with a long-term vision and include strategies for securing ongoing funding, building community ownership, and developing local capacity for project management.
- **Conduct Thorough Needs Assessments and Feasibility Studies**
Prior to project implementation, invest in comprehensive needs assessments and feasibility studies to ensure that projects are aligned with community priorities, address critical needs, and possess a realistic scope for successful completion.
- **Strengthen Community Engagement and Participation**
Foster a participatory approach throughout all project phases, actively involving community members in the design, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of projects.
- **Implement a Robust Monitoring and Evaluation System**
Develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework that includes specific indicators to track the progress, impact, and sustainability of community projects. Conduct regular monitoring visits, collect data on project outcomes, and facilitate feedback mechanisms to enable timely interventions and ensure accountability.
- **Enhance Contractor Management**
Establish a rigorous contractor selection process, develop clear and detailed contracts with performance standards and accountability measures, and implement a system for regular monitoring and oversight to ensure quality control, timely project completion, and financial transparency.

By prioritizing these recommendations, future projects can build upon the successes of the YCLI project's community action plans, mitigate the identified challenges, and ensure that youth-led initiatives are not only impactful but also sustainable, contributing to lasting positive change in the communities they serve.

Annex 09. Mini Case Studies

Mini Case Study:

When Protest Shook the Classroom: Navigating Sri Lanka's "Aragalaya" in Youth Peacebuilding Training

The Scene

On May 9th, 2022. Sri Lanka's "Aragalaya" movement, a wave of protests against economic turmoil, erupts. Pro-government forces attack "Gotagogama," the symbolic heart of the protests, triggering nationwide fury. For the Youth being trained at the YCLI Residential training centre, this wasn't just a news headline – it was deeply personal.

The Dilemma

Many YCLI participants, young people yearning for positive change, had friends and loved ones at Gotagogama. News of the attack, arriving mid-training, brought a wave of raw emotions: fear, anger, helplessness. Demands to abandon the program and join the uprising were immediate and heartfelt. Trainers faced a critical choice: maintain the planned curriculum, or adapt to the turbulent reality unfolding outside?

The Response

Recognizing the emotional toll, YCLI facilitators prioritized participant well-being. Open forums were created, providing a safe space for youth to voice their anxieties, grief, and frustrations. Instead of suppressing emotions, the training embraced them, turning the crisis into a powerful learning experience.

This approach yielded impactful results:

- **Dialogue over Discord:** through Open discussions allowed participants to process their feelings collectively, fostering understanding and empathy.
- **Actionable Peacebuilding:** The curriculum was dynamically adjusted, focusing on conflict resolution and non-violent resistance – skills acutely relevant to the unfolding events.
- **Safety First:** While respecting the participants' desire to join the movement, the program prioritized their safety during curfew hours, arranging transportation and communication networks.

The Takeaways: The "Aragalaya" crisis transformed the YCLI program, showcasing the importance of adaptability and empathy in youth development. The experience proved that even amidst chaos, opportunities exist to:

- **Bridge the gap between theory and practice**
 - Participants witnessed firsthand the relevance of conflict resolution skills in a real-world setting.
- **Reinforce the values of peaceful dialogue and non-violent action**
 - Observing the consequences of violence solidified the importance of peaceful alternatives.
- **Build resilience and adaptability**
 - Participants learned to navigate challenging situations with composure and empathy.

The "Aragalaya" chapter underscored the power of youth-centered, contextually relevant peacebuilding initiatives. By acknowledging the emotional weight of the crisis, the YCLI program not only survived but thrived, demonstrating the program's core values in action.

Annex 10 Additional Charts and tables based on survey responses

Main Challenges faced by youth at the trainings

Participant Feedback – Main challenges faced by youth participants during the training sessions (counts / number of responses)

Figure 2. Challenges faced at training programs by youth



Language barriers, technical difficulties, health issues, pace of training and feeling overwhelmed by the volume of information has affected some participants. A few have participants have indicated that they had some difficulties in understanding the training content.

Ranking of training modules by youth participants (based on survey data).

The surveyed youth participants were requested to rank the training modules they found the most valuable from 1 to 5. The ranking shown are based on responses to the question “(Q 3.6.) Which modules covered in the training did you find most valuable”

Table 8. Module rankings by youth

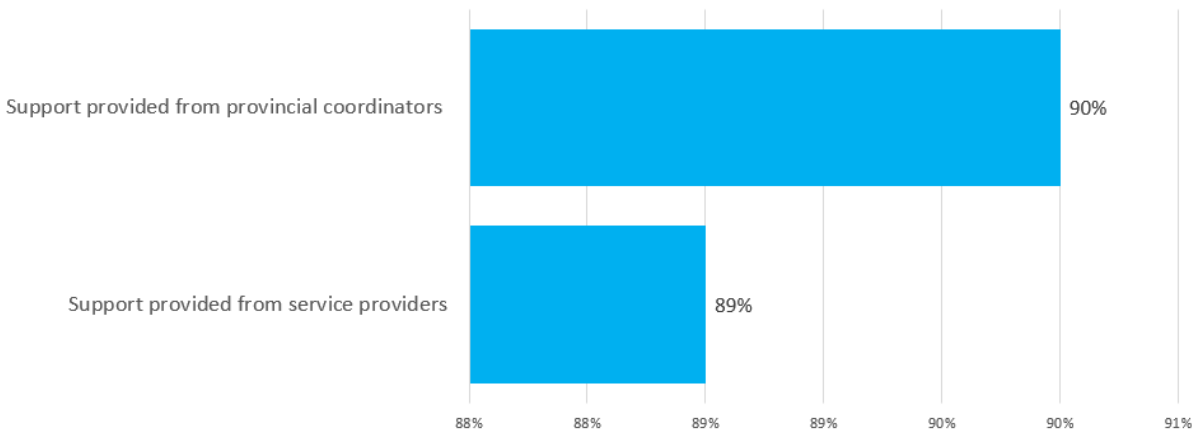
Session	#	Module	Ranking by participants from 1 to 5				
			First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
1st Training	1	Understanding the Healthy Settings Approach	11	7	3	1	4
	2	Conducting Community Needs Assessments	2	2	2	2	9
	3	Gender Equity and Empowerment	102	15	7	4	2
	4	Do No Harm approach	0	2	3	1	2
	5	Collective leadership	3	23	4	5	4
	6	Effective Communication skills for young leaders	3	13	9	12	4
	7	Young people’s role in economic Development	1	2	3	3	2
	8	SDGs in action	4	9	13	9	2
	9	Healthy Lifestyles for young leaders	2	9	14	8	7
	10	Promoting communal integration	0	1	4	0	2
2st Training	1	Responsible leaders	2	7	14	3	2
	2	Problem solving skills for leaders	1	6	10	16	7
	3	Young Leaders for Sustainable Development	4	13	7	6	7
	4	Managing stress and other difficult emotions	0	2	4	9	7
	5	Documenting community interventions	0	0	5	3	5
	6	Future we want	0	0	1	5	6
	7	Health determinants	1	4	2	7	4
	8	Reimagining volunteering	0	0	2	1	1
	9	Effective project management	2	10	5	7	12
	10	Planning for Community Action	0	5	8	8	10

The training module on Gender Equity and Empowerment has been ranked 1st by 102 youth participants, while several other modules achieved significant ranking as well.

Support provided to youth participants by service provider and Provincial Coordinators

Satisfaction of Participants: On support provided by service provider (CSOs) and Provincial Coordinators (combined result of both Satisfied and Very satisfied responses)

Figure 3. CSO and Coordinator support for youth

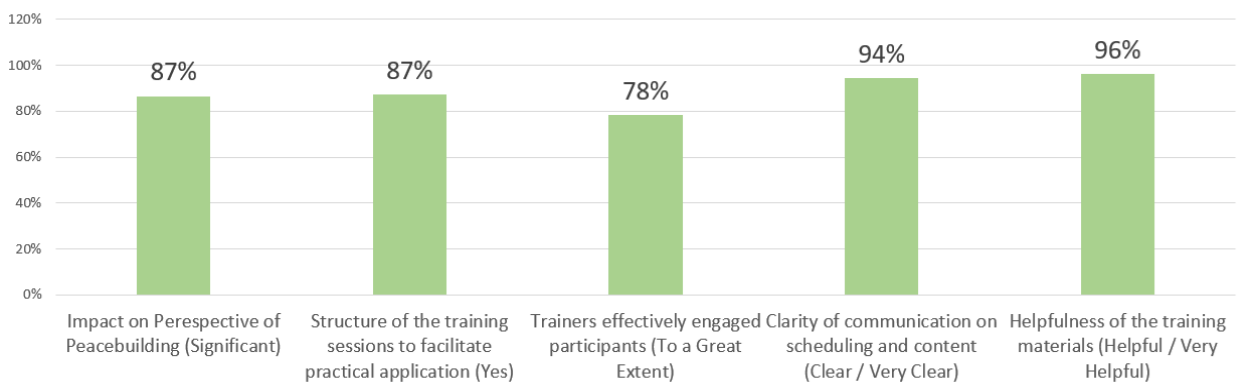


89% of surveyed youth responded that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support provided from service providers

90% of surveyed youth responded that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support provided from provincial coordinators

Participant feedback on a selection of questions posed to them

Figure 4. Participant feedback on multiple metrics



Annex 11. Youth Participant Feedback

This section provides summary reports related to youth feedback based on Survey Qualitative Data

Insights from Youth Participant Feedback

This report analyses qualitative survey data collected from youth participants in a capacity building project. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of participant feedback, focusing on requested improvements categorized by gender, location, ethnicity, and religion.

Key Findings:

- **Demand for Practical Application:** A recurring theme across all demographics is the desire for more **practical and applicable training content**. Participants emphasized the need for real-world application of learned material, suggesting more hands-on activities, case studies, and field-based learning experiences.
- **Language and Representation:** **Language barriers** and the need for **greater representation** emerged as crucial concerns, particularly for Tamil-speaking and minority ethnic groups. Participants suggested including more Tamil trainers, providing training in Tamil, and ensuring accurate and accessible translation services.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Participants advocated for a more **inclusive program**, calling for greater accessibility for marginalized communities, including those in rural areas, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with diverse economic backgrounds.
- **Duration and Scheduling:** Several participants found the **length of the training sessions and the overall program to be excessive**. Suggestions included reducing session length, incorporating more breaks, and exploring alternative scheduling options like weekends or online modules.

Analysis:

- **Gender:** While both genders emphasized practicality, female participants specifically highlighted the need to balance training duration with other commitments, suggesting shorter programs or avoiding week-long sessions to facilitate greater female participation.
- **Location:** Participants from the North and East provinces raised concerns about language barriers and limited representation. They specifically requested more Tamil-language resources and trainers. Participants from rural areas emphasized the need for accessible training venues and content relevant to their context.
- **Ethnicity:** Tamil participants (Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil) voiced the strongest concerns regarding language inclusivity and representation. They suggested incorporating more Tamil language resources, trainers, and content.
- **Religion:** No specific trends emerged based on religion. However, the overall need for inclusivity and representation applies across all religious groups.

Post YCLI Youth Community Engagements

This report analyses the self-reported community engagement activities undertaken by youth participants following a capacity building program. Utilizing qualitative survey data, we examine the types of initiatives undertaken and analyse them through the lenses of location, gender, ethnicity, and religion. 66 (46%) out of the surveyed 142 gave feedback on community activities they engaged with since the YCLI project.

This is in response to the question: Have you engaged in any community development or peacebuilding activities or initiatives following the training? Table 9 summarises the findings disaggregated by category, sex and province.

Table 9. Categorization of post-YCLI youth participant activities

Category	Female							Female Total	Male							Male Total	Grand Total	
	CP	EP	NC	NP	NW	SP	WP		CP	EP	NC	NP	NW	SB	SP			WP
Community Development	1		1		1		1	4	2	3	1	1	3		2	3	15	19
Peacebuilding & Reconciliation		2	1		2		2	7		2	2		3				7	14
Youth Empowerment		1					1	2	1		2		1		4	1	9	13
Civic Engagement							3	3	3		1	1	2	1			8	11
Community Service	1		1					2					1			1	2	4
Gender Equality				1				1		1			1		1		3	4
Education & Skills Development					1			1			1					1	2	3
Social Awareness	1							2									2	2
Social Work							2	2									2	2
Human Rights Advocacy				1				1								1	1	2
Youth Development					1	1		2									2	2
Environmental Conservation										1			1				2	2
Health & Wellbeing																2	2	2
Workers' Rights																1	1	1
Community Building									1								1	1
Cultural Preservation						1		1									1	1
International Development									1								1	1
Student Activism												1					1	1
Capacity Building																1	1	1
Advocacy & Awareness										1							1	1
Community Engagement																1	1	1
Humanitarian Aid							1	1									1	1
Social Inclusion							1	1									1	1
Grand Total	3	3	3	2	5	3	13	32	8	8	7	2	13	1	7	12	58	90

Note. This table shows a categorization of post-YCLI activities of 66 YCLI youth participants based on their responses for the participant survey. Each survey response. The total is more than the number of participants due to some participants being involved with multiple activities or the activities they worked on has multiple dimensions. E.g. *working on youth clubs and youth parliaments*: can be categorised under Leadership and Participation as well as Policy Advocacy.

Key Findings:

- **Diverse Engagement:** Youth demonstrated engagement across a wide range of activities, including community development projects, peacebuilding initiatives, policy advocacy, awareness campaigns, and leadership roles within various organizations. This highlights the multifaceted impact of the capacity building program in empowering youth to contribute to their communities in diverse ways.

- **Geographic Spread:** Participants from all provinces actively engaged in their communities. However, some sub-national variations in the types of activities were observed. For instance, the Eastern Province saw a higher concentration of projects focused on conflict resolution and inter-ethnic harmony, reflecting the region's specific context.
- **Gendered Participation:** While both male and female participants reported active engagement, certain patterns emerged. Women demonstrated a stronger presence in social work initiatives, awareness programs targeting women and children, and projects related to gender equality. This suggests the program effectively equipped female participants to address gender-specific issues within their communities.
- **Ethnic and Religious Representation:** Participants from all major ethnic and religious groups in Sri Lanka actively contributed to community initiatives. Notably, individuals from minority groups played significant roles in projects promoting inter-religious harmony, addressing social issues within their communities, and advocating for the rights of marginalized groups.

Detailed Analysis:

Location:

- **Central Province:** Activities focused on youth empowerment and community development.
- **Eastern Province:** Projects emphasized conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and addressing social divisions.
- **North Central Province:** Initiatives centred on community development, education, and inter-religious harmony.
- **Northern Province:** Advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights, social problem solving, and policy engagement were prominent.
- **North Western Province:** Activities addressed community needs, water scarcity issues, and support for the Muslim community.
- **Southern Province:** Focus on youth leadership, community development, and engagement with religious groups.
- **Western Province:** Diverse initiatives ranging from social work and aid programs to mental health awareness and policy advocacy.

Gender:

- **Male:** More involved in policy advocacy, leadership roles, and technical support for NGOs.
- **Female:** More engaged in social work, awareness programs, education-related projects, and addressing gender equality.

Ethnicity and Religion:

- **Sri Lankan Moor:** Active participation in youth empowerment and civic engagements including involvement in inter-religious committees and addressing religious freedom.
- **Sri Lankan Tamil:** Leading initiatives on Community Development, conflict resolution, LGBTQ+ rights advocacy, and addressing social issues.

- **Sinhalese:** Engaged across a broad spectrum of activities, including community development, education, youth empowerment, and environmental conservation.