



## Monthly Report – Jeremy Liyanage

Sunday 28 September, 2014

### Priorities

- Income generation – procedures, income generation events, Bridge 500 Club
- Staff cohesion and effectiveness – prevention of ‘fall over’
- Governance: registration of Bridging Lanka, financial systems, mirrored subcommittees
- Promotion: website (3 days), presentations (5 days), Facebook (2 days)

### Negotiations

**World Vision** – Michael Poustie, Urban Technical Specialist, World Vision (WV), asked to meet me to discuss a possible urban planning program partnership in the future. WV is reviewing their traditional priority of stabilising rural contexts to the more densely populated, dynamic and diverse urban settings especially regional centres which lack the expertise or the resource ‘clout’ of cities. Currently WV is rolling out a WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) program in Jaffna. Our Santhipuram – drainage and housing program recently scoped by our volunteer team fits the WASH bill. Michael suggested we promote the Santhipuram initiative to DFAT for consideration by their Innovation Fund section.

**RMIT University** – Dr Martin Mulligan after sighting our urban improvement reports and materials, saw real potential for building our Mannar-based fieldwork programs into a new program offering by the recently established centre for Urban Research. I have been introduced to the Centre Director, Dr Hartmut Fuenfgeld who is keen to discuss how this could be brought to fruition.

**Board of directors** – based on work undertaken by Siraj, Ranjit and Rasika, I have developed a Board of Directors package of information. I have now recruited three new directors to Bridging Lanka and retired a ‘sleeping’ director. With the new directors, we now have five. I am still pursuing others. I am proposing a first meeting for Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February and then a Bridging Lanka Strategic Planning session on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February with the directors.



**Lindy Drew-Tsang:** A social worker, trainer and refugee advocate, Lindy was the Queensland Coordinator of the award-winning LAMP (Local Area Multicultural Partnerships) program in local councils throughout Queensland.

Previously Lindy worked for the Australian Red Cross in refugee resettlement, a founding member and director of the Multicultural Development Association for six years and international community mobiliser with Initiatives of Change for ten years.

Lindy has Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Work (hons) and now works as a consultant in the multicultural sector in research, facilitation and training.



**Steve Dunn MPIA CPP:** Steve serves on the National Board of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and is the immediate past President of the Victorian Division of PIA. Currently Steve is working for the Victorian State Government as Project Director responsible for delivery of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy, *Melbourne 2050*. Steve is a Director at the Growth Areas Authority preparing precinct structure plans for some of Melbourne's newest suburbs.

Prior to coming to State Government, Steve worked as Director of Planning and Development in Victorian local government and worked for 6 municipalities over 25 years. He was responsible for town planning, economic development, urban design, contract management and project delivery. Steve has a Graduate Diploma in Urban and Regional Planning, a Bachelor of Arts (Geography / Economics) and a Master of Business Administration. Steve has completed two placements (2006 & 2010) in Sri Lanka as part of the PIA Post Tsunami Recovery and Reconstruction Project preparing local and regional plans, and two placements with Bridging Lanka in urban improvement projects in Mannar.



**Prof Kevin Clements:** the Foundation Chair of Peace and Conflict Studies and Director of the New Zealand National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (NCPACS) at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, and Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association.

Prior to taking up these positions he was the Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies and Foundation Director of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. His career has been a combination of academic analysis and practice in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

Professor Clements has been a regular consultant to a variety of non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations on disarmament, arms control, conflict resolution, development and regional security issues. While Director of International Alert, one of the world's largest NGO's on conflict transformation, Professor Clements pioneered innovative policy and practical approaches to conflict prevention and transformation in Africa, Eurasia and Asia including Sri Lanka. He has written or edited 7 books and over 150 chapters /articles on conflict transformation, peacebuilding, preventive diplomacy and development with a specific focus on the Asia Pacific region.

#### Volunteers

- **Megan Olive:** organised a week-long placement in Mannar for Megan, a Serco Officer, to assist Quily, a new Bridging Lanka staff member, to develop a work plan, write monthly reports and establish a catalogue system for a new library at the office;
- **Aneil Rajaram:** negotiated for a Canadian to volunteer in Mannar for 2 months. Aneil will be involved in the implementation of the Santhipuram project and the English for All program;

- **Saya Lorback:** Saya, an engineer, is undertaking a return visit to Mannar for five weeks to participate in the implementation of the Santhipuram drainage and housing project;
- **Dr Paul Yates:** Paul works as a research fellow and consultant geriatrician with the Departments of Nuclear Medicine and Aged Care Services, Austin Health and specialises in ageing and dementia. Paul will conduct preliminary research into issues of ageing in Mannar.
- **Graham Burgdorf:** former Manager, Parks, Moreton Bay Regional Council will head the Santhipuram team tasked with commencing implementation of urban improvement projects for a six week stint;
- **Eero Piirisalu:** following in the tradition of volunteers from Estonia, Eero will join us for two months and will be involved in the Santhipuram and donkey-related projects;
- **Sophie Dunn:** a final year medical student from Melbourne University is keen to contribute her skills. She has written to the Minister of Health to seek approval
- **Viola weber:** another final year medical student from Germany and friend of Sophie's wants to undertake health related work.

#### **Income generation**

- **Hopper night** – 100 people attended and by most accounts, it was a successful night. We raised approximately \$2,300.
- **Spiire breakfast** – a 'one stop' urban development company who sent one of their staff as a volunteer to Mannar held a breakfast session for staff to hear of the urban improvement work in Mannar. The directors were very pleased and have opened the door for sponsorship. A big 'thank you' to Saya Lorback for single-handedly organising and catering for the event which raised nearly \$400;
- **Funky Donkey** donkey clinic and community centre crowdfunding – met with staff and students to develop a campaign. We have received donkey film footage from Mannar;
- **Already Hooked** asylum seeker crowdfunding – David Okatel has agreed to produce a film clip for an appeal to set up a fishing business for a returned asylum seeker we have previously supported. Filming with Saya as the anchor person occurred a few days ago;
- **Rotary Club of Bentleigh & Moorabbin Central** – breakfast speaking engagement coming up at which we will ask them to consider funding a vehicle for the women's catering company;
- **Share Sri Lanka** – Full steam ahead for the Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October fundraiser at which Prof de Kretser will be speaking. Please distribute fliers through your email networks. Supported by Melbourne City Council (\$600) and Diaspora Action Australia.

**Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade:** Diaspora Action Australia staff, Denise and David and I will be presenting at a DFAT meeting of the Civil Society Network Meeting about strategic engagement with diasporas to further Australia's foreign policy interests, including aid, trade and peace and security. I will be presenting on our urban improvement and business development work.

**International Finance Corporation:** the IFC has recently contacted me to resume discussions on the Mannar tourism strategy: "Now that the District Coordination Committee (Mannar) has approved the EU Support to District Development Programme, we would like to start discussion with you when you are back in Sri Lanka of our future plan on specific areas on Mannar tourism sector. If you could succeed in mobilising the Masters students of Monash University for potential assistance in the development and implementation of tourism related projects in Mannar that will be another milestone achievement in all our efforts."

**Initiatives of Change:** currently laying the foundations for the conducting of an IofC program, *Life Matters*, that links personal morality and ethics with world-changing efforts based on Gandhi's dictum, "be the change you want to see in the world." Much negotiation still needs to occur with IofC Sri Lanka and the Asia Pacific Coordination Group.

**Diaspora Action Australia MOA:** a draft agreement has been circulated which outlines the ways DAA will assist Bridging Lanka to establish good governance mechanisms including finance and other policies and procedures that will make us grant-ready.

**Asylum seekers article:** I have written a draft account: *Sri Lanka: What happens to returned asylum seekers? Penetrating the 'wicked' problem of migration from Sri Lanka.*

## Month in review

### Mannar staff

- Project advice – Women's food company, donkey orphanage and clinic, MM2 committees
- Capacity building – encouraging independent decision making, tackling personality-based issues, taking leadership, resolving conflicts with stakeholders
- Communications – weekly staff meetings, monthly reports and Skype sessions with Kelvin (5), Robin (2), Sinclair (2), James (1), Karnan (1), Quily (3).

### Meetings in Australia

- Urban Improvement subcommittee (2 meetings)
- Income Generation subcommittee (3 meetings)
- Initiatives of Change – Life Matters in Mannar (4 meetings)
- Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School – donkey welfare promotion to human rights group
- Desh Balasubramaniam – Tamil diaspora network
- Stanley Stork – 2,
- Ranjit Bhagwandas – towards an evaluation framework (2 meetings)
- Danu Miriyagalla – Sinhalese diaspora network
- Samantha Gunawardena – lecturer in international development, Monash University regarding masters students subjects being conducted in Mannar
- Mohan Bhagwandas – Life Matters in Mannar
- Larry Marshall – review of Sri Lankan work
- Dr Martin Mulligan – “Community formation in a changing world” and program negotiations
- Denise Cauchi and David Vincent – DAA MOA, fundraiser, DFAT meeting
- Michael Poustie – World Vision and urban planning
- Bridging Lanka volunteer orientation
- Jenni Morris - fundraising
- Prabakaran Ponnuthurai – future BL director