



▶ UK-SL TRAUMA GROUP (UKSLTG) VISITS ..... 1



▶ DR. BILL MITCHELL TO VISIT SAMUTTHĀNA ..... 2



▶ IN-HOUSE WORKSHOPS, VISITING CONSULTANTS AND MORE ..... 2

ISSUE 2 | APR-JUN 2011

# Samutthāna Mosaic

**Country Background.** Sri Lanka is in the process of 'healing' from a violent 26 year civil war with atrocities committed by both sides. This, and the 2004 tsunami, have had a tremendous impact on the population and it is fair to say that the entire country has suffered from trauma, loss and bereavement, resulting in the breakdown of traditional coping structures and ways of life. Many NGOs' response has been almost entirely in the area of basic physical needs – i.e. food, shelter and medicine. In general, mental health has been a grossly neglected area despite it being the need of the moment.

## UK-Sri Lanka Trauma Group (UKSLTG) & Samutthāna

Formed in 1996 by a group of Sri Lankan expatriate and British mental health professionals, the UK-Sri Lanka Trauma Group was registered as a charity in the UK in 1999, with mental health being its priority. Through its organisation in Sri Lanka known as Samutthāna, we provide training at three levels ranging from community volunteers, to counsellors, to medical professionals. We also maintain a Resource Centre, and offer supervision framework to those who attend our Workshops.

## VISITORS FROM UK-SL TRAUMA GROUP

Samutthāna was honoured to have been visited by four key members of UKSLTG over the past few months. **Prof Rachel Tribe** (*Counselling Psychiatrist*) is in fact the Vice Chair of UKSLTG, and **Dr Harriet Calvert** (*Psychoanalyst*), **Dr Shanthi Parameswaran** (*Child Psychiatrist*) and **Ms Dilanthi Weerasinghe** (*Educational Psychologist*) serve on the Executive Committee. They enjoyed their stay here at a time when Sri Lanka was buzzing with World Cup Cricket Fever, and a proactive Staff Meeting in the midst of all this excitement held at Samutthāna turned out to be most encouraging and inspiring.

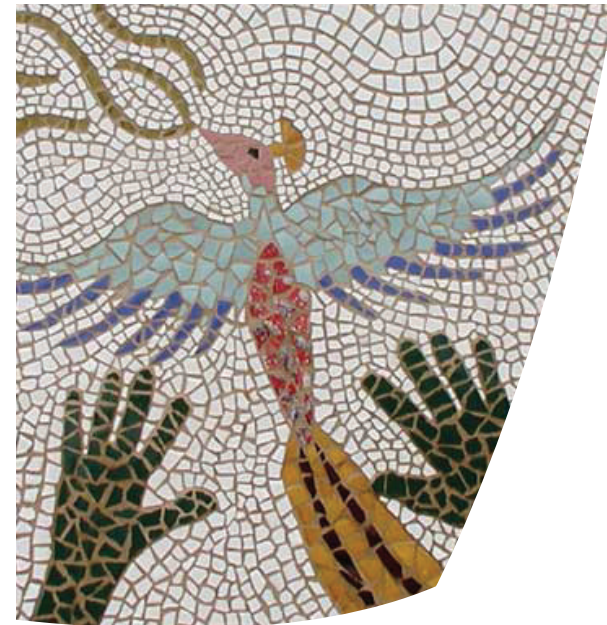
A 2-day workshop (21-22 March) was conducted by them at the **University of Peradeniya** on 'Early Childhood and Parenting' (along with Caroline Gluckman) as well as a 2-day workshop (24-25 March) in Colombo on 'Mental Health Promotion Among Youth in Sri Lanka' with the **Ministry of Health** for doctors and practitioners specialising in Mental Health. Two further half-day workshops at **Samutthāna** (29 March and 1 April) on 'Working with Children and Families' proved to be exceedingly stimulating.

## VISIT FROM DR LAKSHMI SOMATUNGA

Dr Lakshmi Somatunga, Director of Mental Health (Ministry of Health) visited our Resource Centre and met with Samutthāna's Chairperson, Dr Anula Nikapota. Mrs Isuri Roche (Director, Samutthāna) was also present. We hope that the links between our two organisations will be further strengthened as we work towards achieving mutual goals.

## THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN SRI LANKA

Samutthāna's Executive Director, Dushy Parakrama, had the pleasure of meeting up again with His Excellency Mr. John Rankin at 'Her Majesty the Queen's 85th Birthday Banquet' held on 14th June at the Cinnamon Grand. Mr. Rankin has become a very popular face in the short time he has been in Sri Lanka, and it was nice to reinforce the bonds between him and Samutthāna.



## PSYCHO-SOCIAL FORUM

Samutthāna's very own Duminda Wanigasekera (*Trainer/Co-ordinator*) was invited to deliver the key note presentation at the Psycho-Social Forum organised by CHA in April. His talk on 'Constructive Disciplining of Children' was well received by a discerning audience. Way to go, Duminda!





## Big News! Await . . . Dr. Bill Mitchell

The dynamic and world renowned Clinical Psychologist, Dr Bill Mitchell, will be in Colombo in September to present a workshop on 'RESILIENCE BEHAVIOURS'. Made to suit high achievers in both the corporate and psycho-social sectors, this workshop aims to reinforce participants' personal resilience system to protect them against stress; to enable participants to feel more empowered to exercise day-to-day choices which would give them more control over demands and the expectations they have of themselves; and to develop a culture of mutual support within the group with participants taking

responsibility for looking after one another in pursuing resilience behaviours into the longer term.

Bill Mitchell divides his time between professional practice in London, academia (King's College London) and business consulting to a wide variety of international organisations and business leaders across Europe, the USA and Asia. His approach is practical and down to earth – and his workshop tentatively scheduled for Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September is most definitely a 'not-to-be-missed' event.

All welcome.

### BOARD MEETING

The first Board Meeting for the current year was held on 19th April, chaired by Dr Anula Nikapota and attended by Dr Ganesan, Mrs Muttetuwegama, Mrs Roche (*Directors*) and Mrs Parakrama (*Executive Director*). Ms Wasana Pathirana (*Attorney-at-Law*) represented Corporate Services Pvt Ltd.

### PARTNERS

We firmly believe in networking and collaborating with organisations or individuals sharing common values to improve access to mental health and well-being. Between April – June, our top ten partners have been:

- ▶ Basic Needs
- ▶ Bureau of Commissioner General of Rehabilitation (BCGR)
- ▶ College of Paediatricians
- ▶ Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA)
- ▶ Foundation of Goodness
- ▶ Ministry of Health (Mental Health Division)
- ▶ National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- ▶ Non-Violent Peace Force
- ▶ Sithum (Counselling and Wellness Service)
- ▶ VSO

### VISITING CONSULTANTS

**Dr Shanthi Parameswaran** (24 Mar-01 Apr), Child Psychiatrist

**Dilanthi Weerasinghe** (24 Mar -01 Apr), Educational Psychologist

**Dr Katy Robjant** (17 April-07 May), Clinical Psychologist

## In-house Workshops

01 April 2011 – **The Challenges of Working with Children and Families** by Dr Shanthi Parameswaran (*Child Psychiatrist*) and Dilanthi Weerasinghe (*Educational Psychologist*).

20 April 2011 – **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Anxiety** by Ms Stella Wragg (*Cognitive Behavioural/Analytical Therapist*).

06 May 2011 – **Narrative Exposure Therapy** by Dr Katy Robjant (*Clinical Psychologist*).

01 June 2011 – **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Depression** by Ms Stella Wragg (*Cognitive Behavioural/Analytical Therapist*).

29 June 2011 – **Creative Therapy: When Words Fail** by Ms Indira Weerasinghe and Ms Seema Omar (*Applied Psychologists/Counsellors*).

**Dr Anula Nikapota** (*Chair*) visited us from England in April 2011, and her hectic schedule took her to **Basic Needs** where she conducted a 2-day workshop (7/8 Apr) for field workers on 'Recognition of Mental Health Problems'. She met with Dr Safraz at the **Bureau of the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation** (11 Apr) to discuss doing work in Jaffna, and with members of **Foundation of Goodness** in

Seenigama (15 Apr) about conducting follow-up workshops. She ran a session at **NIMH** in Angoda on 'Case Discussion and Management of Child Psychiatric Problems' and conducted a CPD for the **College of Paediatricians** at the Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital where she spoke on 'Medically Unexplained Symptoms in Childhood'. And, of course, Dr Anula attended to work at **Samutthāna**, too!

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*"If you reveal your secrets to the wind, do not blame the wind for whispering them to the trees."*

### THE TEAM



We are overwhelmed by your response and kind comments following the launch of our Newsletter and hope you continue to give us your feedback!

Au revoir from Sameera (*Office Aide*), Anne (*Admin/Finance Asst*), Duminda (*Trainer/Coordinator*) and Dushy (*Executive Director*).



**Samutthāna**

*The King's College London  
Resource Centre for Trauma,  
Displacement & Mental Health*

419 Nawala Road  
Nawala  
Sri Lanka

Phone | 0115.767.585  
Fax | 0112.883.847

info@samutthana.org.lk  
www.samutthana.org.lk