

SAMUTTHANA

The King's College London Resource Centre for Trauma, Displacement and Mental Health in Sri Lanka

Highlights of 2019

January - October

PROJECTS & COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROGRAMS

UNV & Samutthana

MOU was formed with 'United Nations Volunteers (UNV)' in October 2018, to build sustainable programs with a holistic approach which focused on providing mental health support for youth and young women survivors of sexual & gender based violence (SGBV) in the North; particularly Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaithivu districts. With the successful completion of the above initiative, UNV granted further funds for the 2nd phase of the project which was carried out for 3 months, concluding in September 2019. This involved strengthening the existing mechanisms that provide assistance to survivors of SGBV, in collaboration with Women's Organizations, Civil Societies and Community members.



Training in Counselling Skills conducted at the Badulla Teaching Hospital – May to October 2019

National Competency standards and Curricula for counselling NVQ level-4

Duminda Wanigasekera, Trainer and Counsellor at Samutthana along with the support of Provincial Council, Badulla initiated a program in Counselling.

This project was launched in May 2019 on the request of Ministry of Health staff attached to Badulla District Hospital. Six months training was conducted in counselling skills for counsellors employed at the Badulla Teaching Hospital and district and provincial secretariats, teacher counsellors, psychiatric social workers, community psychiatric nurses, nurses' attached to Badulla psychiatric ward and MO's attached to Psychiatric divisions of peripheral and Badulla hospitals. Feedback for the training was favourable and the next phase of training the counsellors on trauma informed care is in progress.





EMBARKING ON A NEW DIRECTION WITHIN THE JOURNEY OF MENTAL HEALTH CAPACITY BUILDING!

As prevention and treatment services for substance use issues is inadequate in most countries, Global Centre for Credentialing & Certification of Addiction Professionals (GCCC) of the Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan has developed a number of models to train, certify, professionalize and expand the addiction treatment and prevention workforce.

Samutthana achieved yet another milestone by forming an MOA with Colombo Plan on the 03rd of December 2018, being certified as an approved training provider for 'Universal Treatment Curriculum for substance disorder (UTC) - Basic Level'. Samutthana holds the responsibility for the implementation and dissemination of the training in UTC, which comprises of 08 individual courses, each designed to develop knowledge, skills and competencies of addiction professionals, as well as promote evidence-based practices for the enhancement of service, delivery and treatment outcomes.



Preliminary phase of the training was launched on the 21st of September 2019 with the implementation of the introductory course of UTC 'Physiology & Pharmacology' for substance use disorders. The first course was conducted within 3 weekends and a paper-based exam will be held on 2nd November 2019.



The second course is scheduled to begin in January 2020. This will deliver a comprehensive understanding in to the elements pertaining to 'Treatment for Substance Use Disorders' which will cover areas on recovery & its management, stages of change, principles of effective treatment & evidence-based practices.



FOSTERING PLURALISTIC MEMORIES FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE — RESEARCH

The International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) Colombo partnered with Samutthana in order to execute the community interventions for this research in Kilinochchi. Samutthana team in Kilinochchi dealt with the coordination with Divisional Secretariat to collate participants and organize the surveys during this 3-month project which successfully concluded in October 2019. The final outcome of the research will include a publication which will comprise of experiences narrated by the participants during their interview sessions with ICES enumerators.



CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Workshop on 'Mindfulness and Mental Health' by Prof. Justin Fifield from Trinity College USA was held in August. The participants gained an invaluable understanding on the basics of mindfulness-based therapies, techniques and therapeutic protocol for group-based sessions.

For further development on Mindfulness, a 3-day course on MBSR will be held in November 2019 by Dr. Prasadi Jayathilaka.

The ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions of one's own & others was the highlight of the workshop on 'Emotional Intelligence' conducted by Dr. Mahesan Ganesan in August 2019.



'Management of Psychological Sequelae after Traumatic Event', a workshop facilitated by Dr. Shamil Wanigaratne was held in June. The workshop conveyed knowledge on disaster management from a mental health perspective whilst recognizing normal and abnormal reactions to trauma.

Aftermath following the 'Easter Sunday' crisis in April, post-war trauma resurfaced while ethnic tensions heightened among the people; especially those living in the affected areas. Samutthana engaged in ways to help the community in need to 'Understand crisis and cope with the situation' through 'Trauma relief' awareness sessions.



Awareness on 'post traumatic stress relief' was delivered to the management and staff of Cinnamon Grand Colombo in June as a support service rendered due to the crisis which occurred in April. This was delivered by Dr. Shamil Wanigaratne, Dr. Isuri Roche Dharmaratne, Dr. Malika Weerasinghe and team Samutthana.



Among such initiatives, we addressed over 100 factory workers in Minuwangoda over a half-day workshop on understanding adverse effects of ethnic divisions and how to deal with arising crisis situations.



Over 200 Army personnel were educated on how to identify 'addiction' and how one should deal with it when it is a fellow soldier or colleague in need of support. A basic understanding on substance use disorders and related treatment was also shared as part of the workshop on 'Knowing Addiction'. Dr Shamil Wanigaratne was the main facilitator for this programme which was held in September 2019.



FUTURE PROSPECTS!



Samutthāna

The King's College London Research Centre for Trauma, Deployment and Mental Health

WHAT WE OFFER

This is a comprehensive 08-week program focusing on Mental Health scope in Sri Lanka and various other aspects that contribute to it's continuous development.

International undergraduate and postgraduate Psychology students from various parts of the world will be eligible to register for this program which will take them through a series of culturally integrated psychosocial experiences.

OUR PROGRAMME

- 1st WEEK - "Programme Intro Week"**
 Introduction to programme & awareness sessions on Do's & Don'ts when dealing with different segments of the community.
- 2nd WEEK - "Acupuncture for Healthy Life"**
 Basic training on Chinese acupuncture.
- 3rd WEEK - "Psychosocial Knowledge Building"**
 Mental health related workshops and field visits.
- 4th WEEK - "Habarana Ayurvedic Placement"**
 Introduction to indigenous medicinal practices and Cultural excursions.
- 5th WEEK - "Community Mental-health Placement"**
 A week spent in the Northern part of the country, observing & understanding various psychosocial interventions implemented since the end of the civil war.
- 6th WEEK - "Psychosocial Knowledge Building"**
 Mental health related workshops and field visits.
- 7th WEEK - "Mind Over Matter"**
 Mindfulness & Meditation Training.
- 8th WEEK - "Graduation Week"**
 Final week proceeding to the Graduation.

DR. ANULA NIKAPOTA—SHE'S FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS



A Tribute to our Former Chairman By Dr Shamil Wanigaratne & Dr Isuri Roche Dharmaratne



With the passing of our dear chairperson Dr Anula Nikapota, Samutthana has lost a great and a passionate leader. Her personal courage and dedication towards the upliftment of Samutthana will be forever remembered.

“I have known Anula for many years and still striving to come to terms with this sad untimely death. Anula was one of the strongest women I have worked with and she was always determined and focused. Her passion in devoting her time for working with children and their training needs was amazing.” Dr. Wanigaratne.

“She was instrumental in mainstreaming the whole operations of Samutthana, as the Chairman, she was passionate about her work. She was a great mentor and enjoyed travelling.” Dr. Dharmaratne.

We at Samutthana have been enhanced by the strength, energy, and vision of Annual and are determined to continue her good work, we are confident that the legacy of her exceptional work will extend far into the future.

We have lost a great Chairman, a wonderful person, and a dear friend.

