FOSTERING LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY CHANGE:

OPPORTUNITIES TO UTILIZE VISIONS' SERVICES FOR
STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY IN SRI LANKA

Human resource development and capacity-building of local civil society (ie: NGOs, institutions, associations, individual leaders, etc.) are absolutely <u>crucial</u> in pursuit of achieving development goals, strengthening economies, providing vital services to the public, and improving the overall quality of life for all. As a country marred by decades of civil conflict, repeated natural disasters, and under-development/under-investment in crucial sectors (ie: health, education, industry, etc.), civil society in Sri Lanka continues to face many obstacles preventing it from realizing its full potential or serving the role in society that it must play to push the country (especially the Northern and Eastern Provinces) forward.

GENERAL OBSTACLES HOLDING CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE NORTHERN & EASTERN PROVINCES BACK

1. A stunted civil society & devastated infrastructure exists on account of the prolonged civil conflict.

2. A lack of exposure, experiences, resources, and connections with the outside world has created a leadership vacuum.

3. Educational systems still prioritize "achievement" over actual learning & skills development and draw from outdated methodologies & practices.

4. Limited resources and infrastructure has led to limited educational opportunities for many.

> ### DEFINING CIVIL SOCIETY
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> Civil society is the "aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest the interests and will of citizens." Civil society includes the family and the private sphere, referred to as the "third sector" of society, distinct from government and business.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN OVERCOMING THESE CHALLENGES

1. There is a clear and obvious need to invest in building the skills of human capital (ie: the personnel & local actors responsible for providing services & leadership) in order to build stronger educational systems, civil society, institutions, and economic prospects. <u>Visions has a</u>

great deal of experience in organizing leadership development & capacity-building programs for local civil society actors and is very much open & willing to do the same for others upon request.

2. Make connections between local civil society and outside markets & communities. Determine what it is that makes you/your work important & unique and begin branding & marketing yourself. Stay connected, network, and be mindful & persistent in seeking out new opportunities.

3. Shift the focus in education in general to creating high quality, holistic, skills-based, experiential, and practical educational experiences and opportunities.

4. Devise and embed income-generating schemes into your ongoing work. Think long-term and think like a business! Explore potential for public-private partnerships when feasible.

PARTNERING WITH VISIONS

Since 2003, Visions has worked with communities affected by war, poverty, and disability to imagine a world where all individuals are empowered to speak with confidence and achieve their dreams. To date, we have directly trained more than 2,100 youth and adults across Sri Lanka, India, and Ethiopia in our own uniquely designed (and vetted), highly interactive leadership and life skills development curriculum. Core leadership concepts, social issues, global leader profiles, community service, life skills, and professional development are all covered in the Visions curriculum.

We have also supplemented these training initiatives with various capacity-building efforts designed to empower local civil society actors to create and pursue meaningful programs and to better sustain their operations as a whole.

Learning through practical, hands-on activities and games, combined with thoughtful discussion and reflection, those who experience the Visions leadership curriculum develop critical thinking & interpersonal skills and learn how to better plan and execute their goals and the role they wish to play in society. Specifically, our curriculum teaches individuals how to:

- identify principles, values, and ideals that will guide their approach to work
- work towards short and long-term personal and professional goals
- communicate effectively, work collaboratively, make informed decisions, and practice other vital life skills
- understand the significance of equality, service, and global citizenship
- build meaningful relationships rooted in empathy and respect

VISIONS' SERVICES FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

As an organization with a long track record of promoting meaningful education and community development in the Northern & Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, Visions is seeking opportunities and local partners (ie: NGOs, hospitals, schools, associations, development initiatives, etc.) with which to partner in bringing about further change. We are open to requests and look forward to discussing potential plans & catering training programs & support with interested local actors.

In working to empower local civil society specifically, Visions is capable of providing training and support services in all of the following areas:

1. **Core Leadership Skills Development**:
   a. What is Leadership?
   b. Ethics, Values, & Self-Awareness

c. Teamwork & Trust
d. Problem-Solving
e. Confidence and Handling Social Pressures
f. Initiative and Ambition
g. Goal-Setting
h. Communication Skills
i. Meeting Skills
j. Diversity and Understanding Difference
k. Community Service & Peer Support
l. Organization Skills
m. Time Management Skills
n. Planning Skills
o. Social Justice and Civic Duty
p. Public Speaking, Visuals, Media, and Outreach
q. Gender Equity and Equality
r. Positive Thinking

> **"...state bureaucracies produce a certain normative discourse about educational procedures, routines and tasks that construct teachers as *technicians of administrative labor*, students as *passive and neutral* and learning as *memorization*."**
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> *— Excerpt from "Seeing Like a Constructivist: Learner Centered Pedagogy and Teacher Education in Chennai, Tamil Nadu" by Dr. Meera Pathmarajah, Visions Founder*

2. **Organizational Assessment & Strategic Planning**

3. **Financial Planning & Identifying Income Sources**
   a. Annual budget review
   b. Government, NGO, diaspora, private, income-generation, and public-private partnerships as potential sources

4. **Tech Literacy & Utilization**

5. **Branding & Marketing**
   a. Creating a branding & marketing strategy
   b. Websites & social media

6. **Donor Relations, Expectations, & Communications**

7. **Grant-Writing**

8. **Impact Data Collection, Assessment, & Reporting**

9. **Teacher Training**
   a. Creative, engaging, and proven teaching methodologies
   b. Utilizing technology in the classroom & establishing "blended learning" practices
   c. Spoken English training

Contact Us

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