



Sri Lanka UNITES
Youth Movement for Hope and Reconciliation

28th April 2019

Responding to Easter Sunday Terror Attacks in Sri Lanka

Who we are:

Sri Lanka Unites is a youth movement for hope and reconciliation, established in 2007 and registered in 2011 as a company limited by guarantee registered under the companies act no.7 of 2007. For 12 years now, Sri Lanka Unites has invested in the next generation of Sri Lanka's leaders to learn from the mistakes of their parents' generation and bring authentic, sustainable reconciliation to our country.

The movement engages at a grassroots level across all 25 districts in Sri Lanka. The movement has over 20,000 youth members across the island and 12 years of experience in reconciliation and conflict transformation. SLU's team comprises of 18 full time and part time staff members, who manage over 100 "Sri Lanka Unites school clubs", in schools across the island, 200 active volunteers and 800 total volunteers in our database who are well equipped to meet the requirements of this proposal activities. In addition to the Head Office based in in the capital, Colombo, SLU also runs 6 "reconciliation centers" in 6 provinces across the country.

Udaiyarkaddu (Mullaitivu), Thanamalwila (Moneragala), Thalawakelle (Nuwaraeliya), Sainthamaruthu (Kalmunai), Kamburupitya (Matara) and Anamaduwa (Puttalam) are the 6 districts which act as hubs for interaction with all provinces. A head office in Colombo overlooks administration of the movement.

Organizationally, the leaders in implementing projects are two Co-National Directors, who are under the guidance of the President of the organization. In addition to two National Directors, a National committee, consisting of young professionals representing all the ethnic and religious group of the country, serve to monitor and administer the progress of the movement and keep the National Directors accountable to perform to their highest potential. The movement also has a Board of Elders who serve as advisors to the movement. They are highly esteem individuals who invested their life on issues related to civic engagement, reconciliation and youth development. Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, the former UN Under Secretary General of Disarmament Affairs, chairs the Board of Elders.

Context:

On the 21st of April 2019, Sri Lanka was caught off-guard. 7 suicide bombers ravaged 3 churches and 3 tourist hotels, killing upto 300 innocent civilians, 40 of whom were tourists. 400 civilians were wounded, some becoming permanently disabled. It was Easter morning, with churches hosting Easter services and Hotels serving Easter brunch. We now have confirmed reports that a local movement with links to an international terrorist organization was behind the attacks.

2019 marks a decade after the civil war in the country. Explosions and suicide bombings have not threatened the country since the end of the war and so the attack left an unsuspecting country to mourn a tragic loss.

In the aftermath of the bombings, hundreds of families suffer through immense grief as many families have lost more than one or two of their loved ones. 45 children were among the victims of the blast. Families lost breadwinners and care takers. It is reported that many survivors are yet to come to terms with the realities of their loss. Each village in Negombo, Colombo and Batticaloa, where the churches were bombed, were filled with hundreds of families simultaneously grieving together.

A majority of the victims were of Catholic faith. Mass burials were held in cleared up forest areas which served as burial grounds to ensure all dead were buried in their village.

For a week now, volunteers from the villages as well as across the country have supported these villagers. We, as a movement, have been in constant observation to understand the needs of these families. We have identified gaps in what is needed for families to grieve and depart from their loved ones, in addition to long-term systems of support for each family. The following proposal is to address these specific needs.

Proposed activities:

The following are 5 responses:

- 1. Counseling seminars for all three affected communities**
- 2. Personal Trauma Therapy for survivors of the attack**
- 3. Memorialization monument and Tombstones for victims**
- 4. Specialized therapy sessions for children impacted by attacks**
- 5. Savings account for children who have lost a parent or both (to be redeemed on their 18th birthday).**
- 6. Webinar series to discuss pressing concerns of moderates- featuring Muslim and Catholic youth leaders live on Facebook**
- 7. #togetherwewillovercome online poster campaign**
- 8. Engaging with Muslim schools and Mosques to counter further radicalization**
- 9. Engaging with with non-Muslim schools to counter bullying**

Implementation plan

1. Counseling seminars for all three affected communities

We are looking to recruit counselors on professional trauma therapy to conduct two seminars with each of the three communities. The sessions will be a broad overview on the importance of grieving, finding support systems and learning of resources for individual support.

- Our goal would be to have the first session by the 3rd week since the attack (2 weeks from now, starting 13th May 2019)

This session will also be used as an opportunity to share on the memorialization and tomb stone initiative (response 3, see below)

- The second session will take place week after. At the one month after the attack.

Each session would be a 3 hour session (9 am - 3 pm)

100 people will attend each session

Two session will be conducted per location (Negombo, Colombo, Batticloa), totaling to 6 sessions under as part of this activity.

Venue of session will be alternative to where the attacks took place

2. Personal Trauma Therapy for survivors of the attack

We will have sign up sheets with victims with personal counselors, who we would have recruited by then. The counselors will conduct one on one sessions with the victims.

We will recruit 100 counselors who will be asked to be available to give personal attention to a maximum of 5 affected individuals from each community.

We will like to provide them a monthly honorarium of Rs. 5000 for their volunteer service. Sessions will take place over the phone/ Skype or in person , based on convenience of both parties. We can pay a higher honorarium for the services of these counselors if we are able to raise more funding.

Commitment of 3 months from each counsellor is expected.

3. Memorializing and Tombstones for victims

We will work with each family to ensure they can have a tomb stone for each of their loved one. Our teams will help design and get the tomb stone ready for the families. This idea originated with the images we saw during the mass burials. The bodies were buried without a tomb stone, with a numbered wooden cross being the only identification for where a coffin was laid to rest. Tombstones will ensure dignity is restored for those who died. We hope to have the tomb stones ready by the one-month memorial ceremony. Latest reports suggest approximately 250 victims out of which 40 were tourists, therefore approximately 210 tombstones will be needed.

Along with the tomb stones we would also like to create a memorial rock at the church with the names of each of the victims and a space for people to place flowers and honor them in years to come.

4. Specialized therapy sessions for children impacted by these attacks

This will take place concurrently to the adult therapy sessions. A number of children are left in a state of shock and grief at the loss of parents/family members. Their wellbeing and mental health will most certainly be affected in future if proper counselling is not provided at this time. The sessions will be conducted by experts in child psychology. We target 50 children per session.

5. Savings account for children impacted by the attacks.

With the help of the leaders in the community we will identify every child who has lost a parent or both and create savings accounts that can be withdrawn on their 18th birthday. We hope to deposit around Rs.50,000 to each account . We will then share these account numbers with the broader public and ask them to donate / deposit more money directly to these accounts. Initial estimates say over 50 children have lost a parent.

6. Webinar series o discuss pressing concerns of moderates – featuring Muslim and Catholic youth leaders live on Facebook

A webinar series will be recorded to tackle key misunderstandings that have been created between communities. The series will be aired live on the Sri Lanka Unites Facebook page. SLU staff will moderate live recorded sessions where youth leaders from each community use factual conversations to address the following

- Ensuring the prevention of communal riots following the terror attack
- Ensuring that moderate Muslim and Catholic youth are not radicalized during the events
- Those watching on live stream have the opportunity to ask questions from SLU

7. #togetherwewillovercome online poster campaign

Facebook continues to be the main platform through which young people communicate their frustrations and even promote peace during times of inter-communal tensions. A poster campaign on Facebook will be used to engage thousands of youth on the platform on conversations around the Sunday attacks. The campaign would be in English, Sinhala and Tamil. 10 key posts will be boosted on Facebook using Rs.10,000 to reach audiences beyond the page.

8. Engaging with Muslim schools and Mosques to counter further radicalization

SLU will engage with Muslim schools and mosques in areas where the attacks took place, as well as with those around areas where weapons were found. SLU trainers will conduct workshops to avoid the possibility of young people/mosque community from wanting to support violence under any circumstance. Each schools workshop will include upto 5 schools being trained at once. Therefore 20 proposed workshops will engage with 100 schools.

9. Engaging with non-Muslim schools to counter bullying

SLU trainers will conduct workshops in multi-cultural schools to counter the possibility of students being bullied due to the given circumstances.

How we plan to engage with partners

- **Church administration:** We will work closely with all three churches who were impacted in Batticaloa , Negombo and Colombo. They will help us identifying families in need, who require counselling, venues to host seminars, etc.
- **District coordinators:** Any engagement with have the long term competent thought our district coordinators and volunteers and will not be limited to a one off response.
- **Multi-religious approach:** our response will be conducted by a multi religious team and will ensure a collective Sri Lankan response to the crisis.
- **Transparent financial administration:** All our financial records for this entire intervention will be displayed live in our website, to ensure financial Transparency.

5 members of staff will be engaged with these activities fulltime for a period of 2 months. All activities will be administered through the Sri Lanka Unites head office in Colombo. No.41,Ridgeway Place, Colombo 04.

Budget

Activity	Unit breakdown	Cost per unit	No. of units	Total
1. Counseling seminars for all three affected communities - Refreshments and Meals - Transport for facilitators and SLU team - <i>Printing Material</i> - <i>Rent Audio visual equipment</i> - <i>Booking Hall for training</i>	Rs.75,000 (100 persons x Rs. 750) Rs.10,000 per session Rs.30,000 Rs.30,000 Rs.50,000	Rs.195,000	6	1,170,000
2. Personal Trauma Therapy - Monthly Honorarium for 100 volunteers in service for three months	Rs.5000 per month x 100 volunteers	500,000 per month	3	1,500,000
3. Memorializing and Tombstones for victims - Cost per tombstone - Memorial ceremony	20,000 50,000		210 3	4,200,000 150,000
4. Specialized therapy sessions for children impacted by these attacks - Meals per session - Stationery	Rs. 37,500 (50 children x Rs.750) Rs. 15,000	Rs. 52,500	6	315,000
5. Savings account for children impacted by the attacks. - Bank account for children who have lost a parent	Rs. 50,000	Rs. 50,000	50	2,500,000
6. Webinar series - featuring Muslim and Catholic youth leaders live on Facebook - Webinar- live streaming equipment- rental per day	Rs. 40,000		2	80,000

7. #togetherwewillovercome online poster campaign - Boosting Facebook online through paid sponsorship	Rs.10,000		10	100,000
8. Engaging Muslim schools and Mosques to counter further radicalization - Travel cost per workshop - Stationery - Food and drinks for SLU volunteers	Rs. 10,000 Rs.5000 Rs. 5000	Rs.20,000	20	400,000
9. Sri Lanka Unites administrative cost - 5 members of staff to organize all activities - Head office utilities and administrative costs	Rs.200,000 (Total monthly salaries) Rs.50,000	250,000	2	500,000
		Total		Rs. 10,915,000