

Integrity

Lifting up Sri Lanka's poorest Pradesheeya Sabha area

TISL lends hand to draw up Development Plan

TISL takes pride in facilitating a four-year Development Plan for Sri Lanka's poorest local Pradesheeya Sabha (PS) administrative area. Working closely with PS members, public officials and community leaders of the Rideemaliyadde PS in the Badulla District, TISL ventured to obtain the widest possible participation of the public in formulating the Plan.

Rideemaliyadde PS chairman Karu Weeraratne described the drawing up of the Plan as a milestone in the effort to erase Rideemaliyadde from the map highlighting the poorest areas in the country. "The Plan prepared with the active participation of the community will undoubtedly help to work towards our goal of moving away from this status," he said.

He accepted that a Pradesheeya Sabha is duty bound to serve the citizens and provide them the services needed in a manner that will enhance their lives and provide them with facilities for their welfare.

Acceding to a request by the PS chairman and members to help them with proper guidance in drawing up a development plan, TISL initiated action with an experienced hand in local administration, Piyatissa Ranasinghe giving the lead. He has served as Chief Secretary of Sabaragamuwa Province and held several key government posts retiring as Secretary to a Ministry. Two consultants at Sri Lanka Institute of Local Government (SLILG), Ajith Ratnayake and I H M Wijayasundera assisted in the task. TISL Chairman M D A Harold participated at the initial discussions and the project was coordinated by TISL manager Nauli Wimalaratne.

The project was funded by Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF).

Six workshops were held to discuss the Development Plan where PS members and officials as well as around 250 members of community leaders representing 42 *grama niladhari* areas in the PS attended.

The community leaders identified the numerous socio- economic problems in the areas. These were discussed under several headings – physical & infrastructure, health & sanitation, environmental management, social development and economic development. Once a needs assessment was done based on these discussions, the planning committee prepared the Plan identifying projects under each category and detailing activities to be done under each.

An action plan has also been drawn up indicating the administrative officials who should be responsible for each task and target dates given as to when each project has to be completed. A budget has been prepared broken down into each year and funding sources have been identified.

The Plan was unanimously approved by the Pradesheeya Sabha and preliminary arrangements are being made to start implementing it. TISL is currently creating awareness among the public in the area along with the PS officials explaining the numerous proposals.



Young people critical for a Better Tomorrow

With nearly a fifth of the world's population between 15 and 24 years old, young people have the potential to stop corruption both as today's citizens and tomorrow's leaders. Where corruption seems like a way of life, promoting integrity among young people is critical to building a better tomorrow.

With this in mind, Transparency International (TI) has launched a Youth Integrity Project (YIP) to promote integrity in young people, and enable and inspire them to fight corruption. In addition, as the general public awareness of corruption issues increases, so do expectations for accountability.

TISL is one of the chapters included in this project and had the rare opportunity of launching it locally with the participation of five regional chapters.

Representatives from TI chapters in Fiji, Indonesia, Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, and the Centre for Development Studies in Vietnam met in Negombo for the regional launch of the Project at a simple ceremony followed by a two-day workshop. Country representative of the World Bank and the National Youth Services Council (NYSC) officials also attended the ceremony.



Getting ready for the survey - enumerators are briefed

TISL will soon launch a Youth Survey, which is the first stage of the YIP.

The survey will measure the attitudes and experiences of young people towards integrity and corruption. This will be the first time that such a survey would be carried out in Sri Lanka.

Regional Journalists trained on Investigative Journalism

More than 80 regional media personnel representing both electronic and print media were trained on Investigative Journalism (IJ) by TISL in association with European Union (EU) during the months of May and June 2012.

Training workshops held in Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Ampara were the first of its kind where TISL- developed Resource Book and Handbook on IJ was used. The two books have been published jointly by TISL and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) to strengthen professionalism in Sri Lankan investigative journalism, both at the national and regional level.

The Resource Book and Handbook on Investigative Journalism (IJ) released by TISL are making a huge impact on the training of regional journalists. Before this initiative TISL had trained more than 120 journalists throughout the country from 2007.



Before commencing training regional journalists, TISL conducted several workshops to Train the Trainers (ToT) to groom senior journalists and university academics on basic methods of Investigative Journalism. One of the workshops was conducted by an internationally reputed trainer Dr.Thiru Wenkatgaswami from India with the support of local experts. Through the training TISL has created a pool of IJ trainers to develop and build the essential skills of those currently engaged in the craft and other stakeholder groups in their respective regions.

The regional training programmes included presentations on Concepts & methodologies on Investigative Journalism, Ethics, Investigative Journalism and Anti-corruption, Sources, Safety and electronics trails. Further, the participants were trained on writing of an investigative story.

After the training, the trainees acknowledged that the inputs gained through these publications will be of immense value for their professional work. They pledged to work towards exposing corruption in their regions using the knowledge gained at the workshop.

TISL launches four publications

During the first half of this year Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) launched three new publications and one research report on themes of public interest.

The first publication - Handbook on Local Governance in Sinhala outlining the services provided by local government institutions in Sri Lanka - was launched on 12th January 2012 at the Yakkalamulla Pradesheeya Sabha – Galle District.

Titled 'Pradeshiya Yahapalanaya' it comprises information to the public on how they could conveniently obtain services from the District & Divisional Secretariats and Pradeshiya Sabhas. The services and relevant documents are explained in simple language in the Handbook which also contains a module of best practices in Municipalities, Urban Councils and Pradesheeya Sabhas.

The first copy of the Handbook was handed over to acting Divisional Secretary of Galle District – Bandula Harischandra. Provincial Councilors, Municipal and Pradesheeya Sabha elected members, public officials and the general public were present at the launch ceremony.

The decision to release a Handbook was the result of findings during anti- corruption programmes conducted by TISL at several districts when it became evident that the public are victims of corruption and malpractices due to lack of awareness.

Two books on Investigative Journalism

Two books – a Handbook and a Resource book on Investigative Journalism were launched at the Sri Lanka Press Institute (SLPI) in March 2012.

The two books have been published jointly by TISL and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) as a continuation of their programme of training journalists on investigative journalism. First copies of the books were presented to university academics, editors and representatives of seven media organizations.



On land issues

The latest of the publications - on land issues, in Sinhala and Tamil was launched at the auditorium of the Central Bank – Anuradhpura branch on 28 June 2012. The auditorium was packed to capacity with government officials, members of the business community and the public.

The first copy of 'Idam Kadam Danamuthukam' was handed over to Government Agent (GA) - Polonnaruwa, Nimal Abeysiri by TISL Chairman M.D. Harold. Among other dignitaries were Additional Government Agent – Anuradhapura, K.B.Hettiarachchi, Deputy Chief Secretary – North Central Province, Keerthi Gamage, Deputy Land Commissioner – Anuradhapura, K.Ekanayake and former Land Commissioner – Southern Province. They were also presented with copies of the Land Manual. Asantha Gunasekara, Deputy Land Commissioner represented the Land Commissioner's Department at the event as a special guest.

The contents of the books include the most common issues relating to the subject, and solutions to them. The books are written in simple language to give an opportunity for the average person to read and understand the contents.

Government Agent Nimal Abeysiri praised TISL for producing a book on land issues which are rampant in Sri Lanka. He described it as giving a 'dharma daanaya' (giving of the Dhamma) to the public.

Promoting anti-corruption message

Over a hundred entries were received for the anti-corruption art competition held to coincide with the completion of the first stage of a TISL programme building good governance and accountability in three local bodies in the Galle District. The local bodies are Ambalangoda Urban Council and Pradesheeya Sabhas (PS) at Ambalangoda and Yakkalamulla.

The competition was held in two categories – one for school children and the other an open competition for adults.

The entries were displayed at an exhibition held at Hareesha Resort, Yakkalamulla recently.



Vithanage Vikum Madusanka, a student of the Nabadawa Sri Sumangala Maha Vidyalaya won the first prize in the schools competition while M T Nishathi from Alutwela was the winner in the open competition.

Shelter for Integrity opened

Corruption hurts people all over the world every day. This is why more citizens who are victims or witnesses of corruption need to speak up to challenge it and be part of the solution. However, raising one's voice, resisting paying a bribe or reporting corrupt behavior is not easy in many countries. Mechanisms to support, protect and motivate whistleblowers are needed. When those are in place, then no one need remain silent to corruption or have to confront it alone.

In an effort to build such safeguards, TISL in furtherance of its mission of 'building a nation that upholds integrity' has launched a mechanism to fill that void.

The 'Shelter for Integrity' – a Center for Legal Advice against Corruption, will empower victims and witnesses of corruption to exert the benefits.

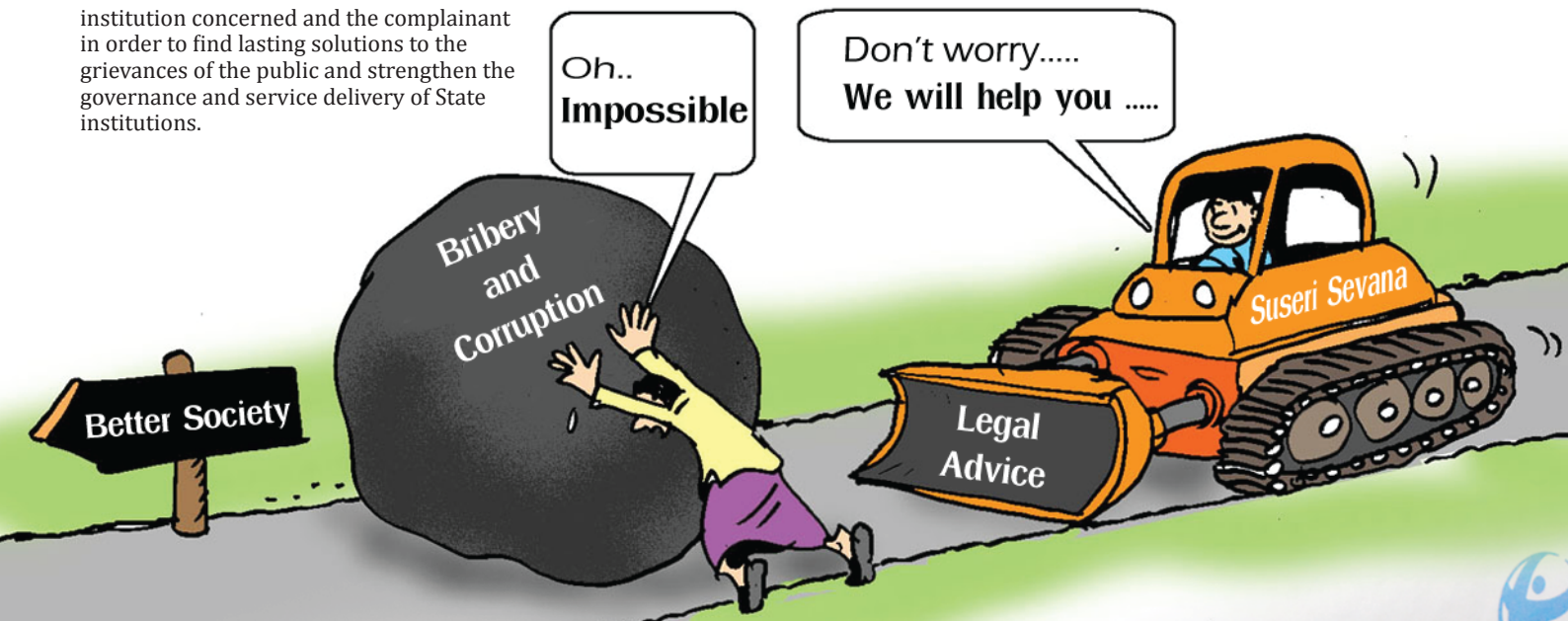
The Center will provide the public with the opportunity of seeking legal advice free of charge when faced with an incident of corruption while obtaining a service from a State institution. The Center will mediate between State institution concerned and the complainant in order to find lasting solutions to the grievances of the public and strengthen the governance and service delivery of State institutions.

The Center was declared open by Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration, Padma Siriwardena. She promised to extend the fullest cooperation of the Ministry to make the Center a success.



TISL believes that the Center will empower citizens to make and pursue corruption related complaints and bring about a change in their attitude towards corruption and realize that corruption is not insurmountable. The Center will also be able to support State institutions through evidence, solutions and capacity building their own initiatives to eliminate corruption and enhance principles of good governance.

The Center housed at No 6, 37th lane, Queen's Road, Colombo 3 operates a hotline – no (011) 20 55 255.



Parliament Watch Report launched

The research report on Parliamentary best practices in Sri Lanka was launched on 16 February at the Galle Face Hotel with the participation of Ministers, Members of Parliament, academics, activists and media. A change in the Parliamentary best practices was endorsed at this national forum organised by TISL and South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR).

The research report has made several recommendations intended to make parliamentary proceedings close to the public. The need for the Order Paper and Order Book be made available through District Secretariat Offices and Post Offices has been stressed. It has also been suggested that the Agenda should be published in the newspapers. The absence of an internet database of this information in a searchable format has been highlighted as well as the need for unedited, verbatim records of the proceedings be uploaded into a searchable online database. Another recommendation is the introduction of a Code of Ethics for Members of Parliament and the monitoring of compliance with this Code by a special parliamentary committee.

The ministers addressing the national forum said that while some recommendations were good and can be implanted, there were some which were "only dreams in the prevailing context of political culture.



'Sunday Island' Editor, Manik de Silva addresses the gathering on the 'Relevance of Parliament Watch'. At the head table are (from left) SAHR Executive Director - Shiranthi Jayatilaka, Minister of Human Resources-Hon D E W Gunasekera, TISL Executive Director- Dr Wijaya Jayatilaka & Minister of Justice - Hon Rauf Hakeem.



Encouraging response for Sambhashana programmes

Sambhashana - TISL's monthly outreach programme to discuss topical issues is being highly appreciated by a mixed audience.

In recent months the discussions centred round much-talked about themes. These included COPE exposures, Crisis in the universities, Declaration of assets & liabilities, Rupee crisis, Urgent Bills and Insider trading in the share market.

The panelists included academics, parliamentarians, activists and professionals. Media showed a keen interest in the programmes giving ideal coverage both in the print and electronic media.

Several Position Papers were developed based on the Sambhashana discussions.

TISL broke new ground when the first Sambhashana programme in the outstations was held in Anuradhapura. Land issues was the theme of the discussion.



New members inducted

Seventeen new faces were inducted as TISL members at the Annual General Meeting and Members' Day held on 26 June. Among them are professionals, media personnel, a winner of the National Integrity Award (NIA) and winners of anti-corruption competitions organised by TISL.

Along with other members they participated in a lively discussion on how they can contribute effectively towards the activities of TISL. They interacted with TISL team members on their possible involvement in the areas covering capacity building, advocacy, networking and knowledge generation.

The annual general meeting was presided over by TISL Chairman M D A Harold and was well attended.



Who is your nominee?

**Do you know of
an individual/ organization who has**

Fought against Bribery & Corruption?

Promoted Good Governance?

Stood up for Integrity?

**If you do, nominate for the
National Integrity Award 2012**

For details call

011-5627432

It's time to send in nominations for the National Integrity Award (NIA) 2012 which is being held for the ninth consecutive year. The nomination process has begun and the nominations will be accepted till 31st August.

Annually TISL awards the NIA to an outstanding individual or an organization fighting corruption and for demonstrating exceptional integrity in public engagement.

The Award winners are a source of inspiration to the anti-corruption movement because their actions echo a common message: that corruption is surmountable.

The presentation of the NIA is the signature event organized to commemorate the United Nations Anti-Corruption Day, which fall on 9th December, designated to 'raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it'.

TISL have so far recognized courage of 15 persons – ten of whom were selected as outright winners and the other five gained special mention.

Individuals and organizations are invited to nominate persons or organizations who have shown exemplary courage for the cause of integrity and in the fight against corruption in any sector or sphere. The accepted nominations will go through a process of inspection and selection carried out by an independent committee of persons of excellent repute.

For more details please contact, Transparency International Sri Lanka, No.6, 37th Lane, Queen's Road, Colombo-03.

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