

“GIVE PEACE A CHANCE” - PEACE EXPEDITION 2007

“I never thought that I would get a chance to spend two days with Sinhala girls here [in Trincomalee]. I don’t know Sinhala and they don’t know Tamil but we were able to communicate very well. Now I can even speak a little bit of Sinhala!” said a young Tamil woman from Trincomalee.

As part of the “Give Peace a Chance” campaign organised and implemented by Alliance Development Trust - the relief and development arm of the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka (NCEASL), 40 Sinhala youth from the South of Sri Lanka and 40 Tamil youth met in the North Eastern town of Trincomalee. The programme was conducted from the 14th - 17th May 2007. The purpose of the programme was to build bridges of friendship and understanding between Sinhala youth and Tamil youth.

The Sinhala youth hailed from the towns of Galle, Hambantota, Avissawella and Katharagama. They were introduced to their Tamil counterparts in Trincomalee and had the opportunity to experience first-hand the Tamil culture and witness the tense war situation in Trincomalee.

During their stay the Sinhala youth had an unexpected first hand experience on what the Tamils in the war affected areas go through. On the first night, the sky was ablaze with heavy artillery fire directed at an aircraft in the skies over Trincomalee. This caused much agitation amongst the Sinhala youth who were not used to this. However, they prayed and overcame their fears.

The peace expedition helped to break through mental barriers and brought understanding, forgiveness, repentance and peace into the hearts of these young people from the two ethnic communities. They became beacons of hope, spreading the message of peace in their respective communities, by drawing on their experience of the peace expedition. The peace expeditions continued as the youth from Trincomalee visited the South and subsequently youth from the North also visited the South. These visits helped them to bond with each other enabling better understanding of their cultures and differences.

The programme was fully covered and telecast by the Young Asia Television (YA TV) - https://youtu.be/7y_QgfRtG7A