



## Using media to promote the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)



## Training programme on Community Journalism for the members of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)



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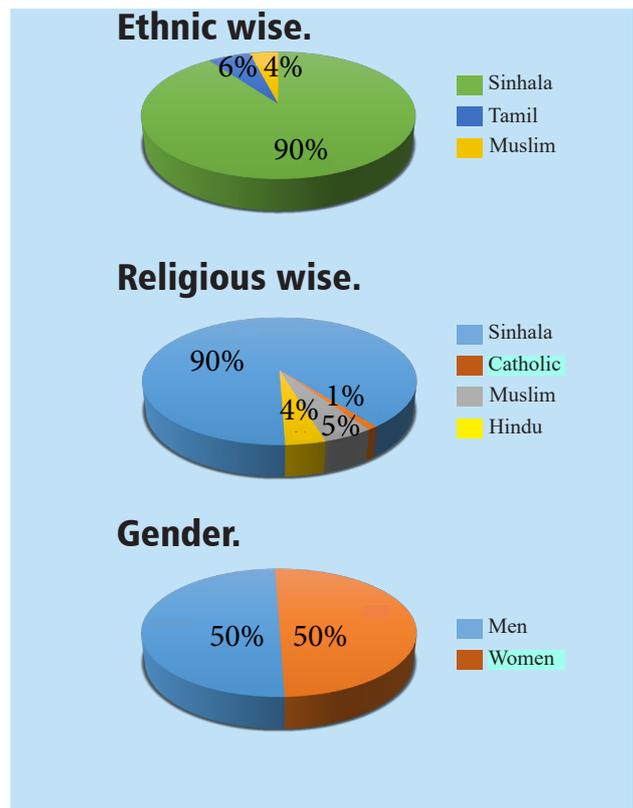
# Introduction.

Community Journalism (COJO) is a digital media training program implemented to provide opportunities to promote the role of Civil Organizations who are working for community and social development in Sri Lanka. This was implemented in Southern Province and Uva Province under the project of Enabling the use of the media to broaden the role of Civil Society Organizations for a more democratic Sri Lanka, with the financial support of Asia Foundation.

Civil Organizations who are operating in Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Monaragala and Badulla districts are engaged in a special task for the development of community in their districts and provinces. But the opportunities available through the media to promote those roles are very limited. Through this project, the staff members of those organizations were given a training on creating video stories using mobile phone applications and Through that, they were empowered to create video stories about the services of those organizations and to spread them through the social media. The major purpose of this training program was to improve the public confidence in grassroots Civil Organizations that have been affected by social and political influences.

## Identifying the participants.

75 organizations from South and Uva Province had applied for this training program. 50 most suitable organizations were selected out of them, 10 organizations each from one district. 4 organizations who are working for people with disabilities were also included. The number of CSO staff members selected from each district is 20 (10 women and 10 men). The number of staff members who participated in the 05 training programs is 100 (50 women and 50 men). 05 people with disabilities were also included among them. It is 100% when taken as a percentage of the total number targeted in the project. Priority was given in involving only staff members who have interest and knowledge about the use of media.



“It is very difficult to get publicity about the problems, challenges and human rights violations of people with disabilities through the media. Society has a negative attitude towards them. So, to change it to some extent, we hope to socialize our activities as people with disabilities through social media with this acquired knowledge.”

Mr. Dulip Sampath  
the manager

Wellassa Organization of Persons with Disabilities – Monaragala



## Strategy of implementation.



At the district level, 05 training programs were conducted as four-day training programs in Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Monaragala and Badulla districts from 01st of March 2022 to 31st of August 2022. Mr. Ruwan Bogamuwa and Mr. Kapila Ramanayake, who have an extensive knowledge of media using mobile phone applications, led the

training program as trainers. For the first time in Sri Lanka, a training manual on journalism using mobile phones was also published. The first two days of the training program were reserved for understanding theories. The basic knowledge and training on importance of using mobile phone applications for community journalism, the basics of videography and photography, methods used in videography, conducting and filming interviews, the basics of video editing, the use of video editing mobile phone applications and the use of social media are provision of training was covered by this.

“There are many entrepreneurs who have been built by helping our organization, especially those who sew carpets, home gardening, and are self-employed. Now, using this technology, we can make short videos about them and advertise them through YouTube or Facebook. Through this, there will be a more space for the products of those entrepreneurs; our organization gets good publicity too.”

Miss Shamrina Harira  
Computer Operator  
Women's Union - Hambantota District.



## Practical and Field Visits.



On the third day of the four-day training program, the trainees were given the opportunity to go to the field and observe the successful projects implemented by other Civil Organizations in the respective district and produce video stories about them. Under the supervision of the trainers, there was an opportunity to practice the recording of scenes related to video stories and the recording of interviews. The importance of this field activity was that, the trainees had the opportunity to observe the projects or the services implemented by other civic organizations

in the same district and produce video stories about them. On the fourth day of the training program, an opportunity was given to post-production of the video stories recorded in the field. Through this, the trainees had the opportunity to practice the post production activities using mobile phone applications. At the end, every trainee has the opportunity to practically produce a video story with the time duration of 03-05 minutes. Thus the number of video stories produced in all 05 training programs is 100.

“For so long, we spent a lot of money to make videos about the work done in our organizations for promotion purposes. Now after joining this program, we received a good training from the point of taking a video to editing a video. Now using this knowledge and skill, we have been able to make videos about the role of our organization and release to Society”

Miss Janani Dilshani  
Uva Farmer Development Foundation  
Halilala – Badulla.



## The role of a Digital Journalist in promoting the services of Civil Organizations.



The workshop also included a training session to gain an understanding about the opportunity to promote the roles of their organizations by using the media as civil society activists. This training session was conducted by Dr. Niroshan Ekanayake, Executive Director of Kandy National Peace Center. How to use the media as civil society activists, the opportunities and advantages that come to civil society organizations from using the media, the importance of maintaining the civil organization with more transparency and the importance of using the media for that purpose, were delivered through this session.

“This is a good opportunity to share the progress of the work done by the civil organizations and the social change. As a resource person in this program, I saw it as a good opportunity for the civil organizations to improve their promotion. And because of this, the transparency of the civil organizations is also improved.”

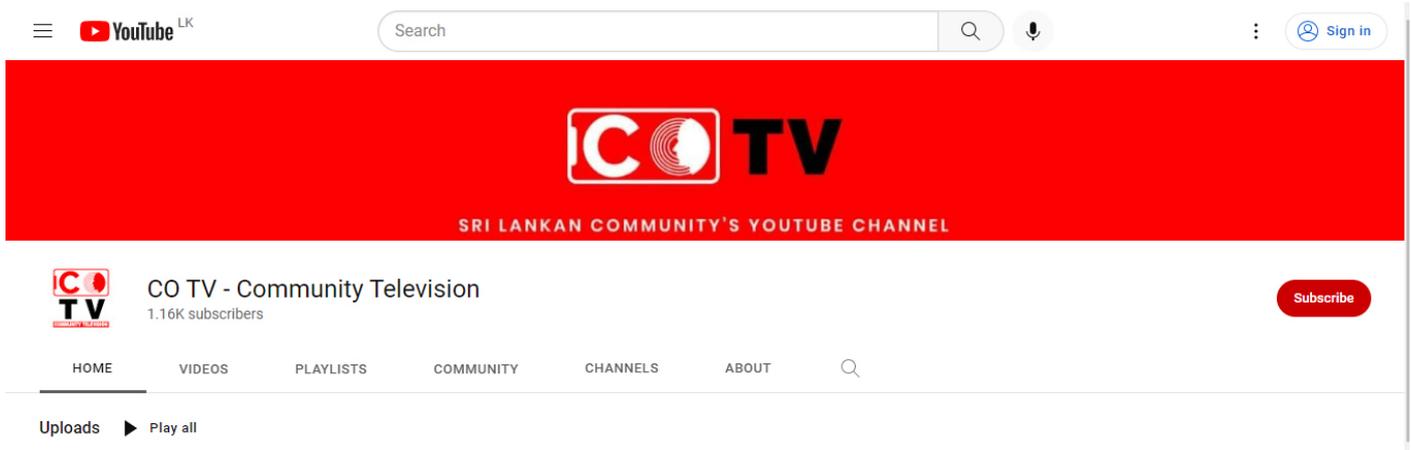
Mr. Niroshan Ekanayake  
Executive Director  
SAMADANA National Peace Center – Kandy



“Especially when it comes to the tea plantation labor people in the south, their problems are very rarely communicated through the media. Therefore, as an organization, we hope to use mobile phone media to inform the society about the problems they face socially, politically, culturally and economically.”

Mr. Anthony Jesudasan  
Chairman  
Plantation People's Voice Organization

# Digital space opens to trainees.



Pratibha Media Network created 02 digital spaces through this overall project to promote the role of civil organizations. This project has been designed with the aim of meeting long-term demands. First one is to start a YouTube channel called CO TV - Community television (<https://www.youtube.com/@cotvsl>). This has now become as the first YouTube channel to promote civil society activities in Sri Lanka. All the video programs produced by the trainees are being disseminated through this.



The second digital space was the creation of a website called [www.cojo.lk](http://www.cojo.lk). It was created with the aim of disseminating information, video stories and radio programs about the activities of civil society organizations. The video stories produced by the trainees through this training programs can also be seen here. Pratibha Media Network will implement future programs and projects to suit these two digital spaces.

## Achievements.



- \* Being able to implement the training programs in two provinces.
- \* Being able to cover 05 districts.
- \* Being able to provide training for 50 CSOs.
- \* Empowering the media units of 50 CSOs by equipping them.
- \* Being able to train 100 CSOs staff members.
- \* Being able to empower 4 CSOs operating on behalf of disabled people.
- \* Being able to train 05 people with disabilities as digital journalists.
- \* Ability to produce 250+ videos promoting CSOs.
- \* Enabling PMN to create two digital spaces for community journalism.
- \* So far, many trained CSOs have started to use media.

## Lessons learned.



- \* Grassroots level civil organizations did not have the opportunity to access the use of media and it was possible to provide that opportunity through this effort.
- \* Learning that the use of grassroots civil organizations should be further strengthened.
- \* Understood that a planned use of media is needed to promote the roles of CSOs at the ground level.
- \* Stimulations should be held regularly for the transparency of CSOs.
- \* Networking of grassroots CSOs is very important.
- \* It is essential to access the use of media to respond for the challenges and accusations against CSOs.
- \* Understood that the economic strength of women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups can be supported through promoting economic generating activities run by them.

## Future steps to promote Community Journalism.



- \* Providing training and capacity building to active the civil organizations in the 25 districts of Sri Lanka to enter the media.
- \* Registering the [www.cojo.lk](http://www.cojo.lk) website as a news website.
- \* Providing opportunities for women, youth and marginalized groups to access community journalism through other projects implemented by Prathiba Media Network.
- \* Empower local journalists and citizens to access media practices using mobile applications.
- \* Maintaining the digital spaces created as a means of socializing and providing solutions to the social, political and economic problems faced by the communities in Sri Lanka.

“I was joined for this training program as a volunteer of the organization. After this training, our organization recognized my talent and therefore they offered me a full-time job opportunity from the organization. Now I am managing the social media activities of the organization.”

Janith Lanka  
Saviya Development Foundation - Galle



## Prathiba Media Network

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