

Knowledge of conflict and ethnicity; young people and reintegration of communities in the north of Sri Lanka

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A whole generation of youngsters from the northern Sri Lanka has lived in the regime of war and with the consciousness and consequences of violence and displacement. Their understanding and knowledge about the reasons for the conflict, of ethnicity, and of other groups differ according to where they have been during the conflict and under which conditions they have lived.

Analysing connections between ethnicity, place and gender, this paper explores the role of young people in Sri Lanka's conflict and peace process and particularly discusses the potential of involving young people more actively in the reintegration of different communities and in the development of the war affected areas. The paper is based on interviews with different groups of young people – from approximately 16 to 25 years old – affected by the war; IDPs, refugees in Tamil Nadu and people in the militant movements. Young people's knowledge about the war, their understandings of different solutions to the conflict, and their dreams and understandings of how they could contribute to a better country for their people to live in are discussed.

Key words: Ethnic conflict; Young people, Reintegration, Peace process; Sri Lanka