



An Island Wide Network: Young Councillors National Platform

Implementing partners: Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities

Bringing Young Councillors together

Young councillors national platform in Sri Lanka was set up in conjunction with the World Urban Forum in Nanjing on 5th Nov 2008, where Young councillors from Sri Lanka, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana and the Netherlands signed founding documents to set up the “Young Councillors supporting Millennium Development Goals”

This network brings together the Young Councillors in Sri Lanka which consist of almost one fourth of the elected councillors. With a small funding support from VNG (total of Euro 13000) the Federation was able to mobilize about 1100 young councillors around Sri Lanka. YCNP has become one of the strongest youth network in Sri Lanka working on promoting peer learning, networking, lobbying for rights and demands and working towards achieving aspirations of youth in the local governance sector and promoting harmony among different ethnic groups in the post war era.

Support from VNG International

VNG international provided funding support and technical assistance to set up the local platform. VNG International provided international exposure opportunities to YCNP chairman and other members in the international platform, where the views were exchanged and they could learn from each other. Small grants helped to bring together the local members at district/provincial levels to exchange ideas, learn from peers, and resolve common issues and lobby for rights.

Young councillors organized a signature campaign to establish a quota for women in the local governments. They also visited to the war stricken Northern Province of Sri Lanka to mobilize youth groups to contest in the local government elections, which resulted in larger numbers embarking to democratic governance process.

Project Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Young councillors national platform brings together young councillors (both men and women) as a strong youth network, working together to achieve common objectives. In the process it was observed that they were able to sit at a round table shredding political differences to pursue common goals. At the initial stages setting up of an island wide network was a challenge with limited funds but commitment of the members proved that it is not only the money but commitment of individuals and the leadership that gave the strength to establish such networks.

YCNP is now in the 4th year of continuous operation as a network under a new leadership and a board, embracing the new members and giving them necessary guidance and support. Old members are providing direction and guidance as volunteers for the new comers. Most of the activities are organized on voluntary basis by the members. It can be concluded that donor ideas and concepts transformed to sustainable actions as long as they are customized to the local needs and contexts.

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