



# The Butterfly Garden

Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

**Final Report of a Program Development and Research Project (1998-2000)**



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(1998-2000)**

**by**

**Robert Chase MSc MD  
Department of Community Health Sciences  
Faculty of Medicine  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Canada.**

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## SECTION - I

### Introduction: the PWRDF-SLCDF Research Project: An Approach to Evaluating the Butterfly Garden

Since 1996 the Butterfly Garden, located in Batticaloa in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province has been providing a multi-faceted program for children of differing ethnic backgrounds affected by the Sri Lankan North East civil war. It is a 'peace garden' for children and a program of creative play, reconciliation and healing for schoolchildren adversely affected by armed conflict. Seed funding for site development came from the Canada Fund of the Canadian High Commission with ongoing operational funding for the Butterfly Garden generously given by Stichting Humanistisch Instituut Voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (HIVOS) since 1997. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has also provided support for some capacity building activities.

The Butterfly Garden's approach to working with war-affected children has attracted interest both in Sri Lanka and internationally. The methods have evolved over 4 years of integration into the local communities and lives of several hundred children. It offers a model of working with war affected children that is innovative and indigenous. Through play and a community of caring children are provided a unique opportunity to engage creatively and 'rehabilitate' (Latin: come home to oneself). The vision of the Butterfly Garden extends to community reconciliation and peacemaking in its multi-ethnic programming and community outreach.

This book describes the Butterfly Garden program's principles and activities, and is the final product of a one-year (1998-1999) research project "The Butterfly Garden: An Approach to Evaluation", supported by Sri Lanka Canada Development Fund (SLCDF) and Primates World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), the Anglican Church of Canada. The research project focused on certain aspects of the Butterfly Garden program, primarily the healing work of a process and activity stream called the Amma Appa Journey ("trans. Tamil, "Mother Father Journey"), available to individual children with demonstrable needs. The emphasis in this book on this set of activities does not imply their greater importance over other aspects of the program. Sections II, III and IV provide general background and description of the Butterfly Garden. With this context Sections V, VI focus on more specific research project activities. Section VII consists of case studies of 20 children who participated in the Amma Appa Journey and about which visits to home and schools were made to assess the impact of attending the Butterfly Garden.

The Butterfly Garden will continue to evolve, adapt and grow. The activities and processes described herein are not definitive; they will also change along with the children the Garden has undertaken to accompany, and their communities. As a collaborating researcher since the beginning of project work in Batticaloa in 1995, it has been my wish to present a chronology of the Butterfly Garden, and to document the many contributions made by individuals and organizations so that we might better understand and learn from this unique project. The Butterfly Garden's commitment to simple and universal values about children, caring and non-violence, holds an implicit critique on aspects of donor-driven relief and development business for war affected children, which tends to 'commodify trauma' and deliver short-term programs without a community-based matrix.

I express my deep thanks to Paul Hogan and Rev Fr Paul Satkunanayagam for years of working and learning together that have been transformational to my own understandings and efforts. Paul Hogan made available his writings on the Butterfly Garden's approach to healing as developed in 'Garden Paths: Presence in Poesia as the Practice of Peace'. This book contains excerpts from his as yet unpublished writings (indented text in italic script) that describe the philosophical ground and pedagogical foundation of the Butterfly Garden's approach to healing and the accompaniment of war affected children. Others contributed to the dialogue and ideas in this book, and I wish to acknowledge in particular, contributions from Ken Bush PhD, Joanna Santa Barbara MD and Pat Lawrence PhD, for their help and time. Photographs were kindly provided by Gobu, Paul Hogan and Chris Lowry.

I wish to thank the project team: Ms. S. Chandrareka (Rekka), the full-time research assistant, Father Paul Satkunanayagam, director, Felix Kamalanathatheepan, office manager, and Anthony Pillai Jeray. The Butterfly Garden animators who also contributed significantly to the project work include Shantiepan, Chandra, Saratha, Andrew and Marliya- animators who accompanied children in the Amma Appa Journey, and made home and school visits; Ms. Habeeba and Mrs. Jaya, community interviewers; Ruwan and Naguleswaren for their graphic designs of the Amma Appa Game; and Gobu for a rich photoarchive.

I wish to thank staff of the various funders of this project: Sri Lanka Canada Development Fund (SLCDF) and South Asia Partners (SAP): Arumugam Sornalingam, Stephen Kester, Pam Foster, Reneé Giroux, and



Primates World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF): the late John Vandenberg, Ellen Vandenberg, Jim Davis, and Theresa Zyp.

I am grateful for the permission and trust extended to me in the publication of this book and to make it available to those who wish to learn about the Butterfly Garden. However, visitors, information requests and enquiries, well intentioned though they are, can significantly tax the resources of the staff and divert attention away from the primary work of the Garden. It is important to recognize as well the precarious nature of a community based program in early stages of development in the 'predictably unpredictable' setting of a war zone.

*The ritual space of the garden must be protected so that the whole idea of inner and outer worlds and the communication between them is allowed to function through the poesia of the garden to better promote the healing of the children. It is important to keep the garden hidden and let the intimacy of personal contact through art and play emerge without the scrutiny and criticism of outsiders who themselves do not have any kind of creative practice in their lives. Very often these outsiders are well-meaning. They come as friends. Perhaps they want to support the garden in one way or another – to give money or publicity or to voluntarily offer their services. Perhaps they wish to learn from what is going on at the garden. In the beginning however, if these visitors do not know what poesia is from personal experience, if they do not in some way maintain ritual space within their own lives, their presence will profane the space and sow confusion. As the garden matures and external structures emerge which give it both a profile in the community and a protective shell, some outsiders can be allowed to come in as trainees, as supporters, as wise observers, advisors, teachers and friends. Nonetheless, the very nature of the garden is gestation and propagation of the dream of creation. Acts of gestation are always secret, dark and mysterious.*

While acknowledging the support and contributions others have made, I take responsibility for the views expressed herein which are not necessarily those of the project funders. Please direct any inquiries to the researcher, not the Butterfly Garden or its staff, unless arranged otherwise. This was one of the stipulations in undertaking this documentation out of respect for the Butterfly Garden's primary focus on the children and their program, and the limited resources available to respond to inquiries.

This book is dedicated to the children of the Butterfly Garden and their sisters and brothers in war zones throughout the world.

Rob Chase MSc MD FRCPC Community Medicine  
Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Manitoba.  
S112-750 Bannatyne Ave,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 0W3, Canada.  
Tel (204)-789-3885; fax: 789-3905 Email: chaser@cc.umanitoba.ca

## **1.2 Background: History of Sri Lanka and its ethnic conflict**

Sri Lanka is a small country, a quarter the size of the United Kingdom, off the southern tip of India. Its 18.5 million people are comprised of the Sinhalese majority population (74%), which is Sinhala-speaking and mainly Buddhist. They are largely located in the southern, central and western portions of the island. The Tamil population (18%) is Tamil-speaking, mainly Hindu and concentrated in Northern and Eastern provinces. Sri Lankan Tamils have inhabited Sri Lanka for at least a millennium but share language and culture with Tamil populations of South India (55 million). 8% of the population are ethnic Muslims of Moorish descent. Other minorities include the Burghers, descendants of 16th century Dutch and Portuguese extraction, and "plantation" Tamils (one-third of the island's Tamil population) engaged in the tea plantation since the late 19th century.

The British ruled the colony of Ceylon from 1832 until independence in 1948. Compared to India, Ceylon's attainment of independence was untraumatic. Practically speaking it followed on the coat tails of the Indian struggle. The country enjoyed a high literacy rate and a politically sophisticated electorate, which had exercised universal adult franchise since the 1930s. Even in the early 1980s, it was still common for Sri Lanka to be labelled a "model Third World democracy", with a robust parliamentary system which regularly voted the incumbent party out of office. Health standards and the quality of life were high. Indeed Sri Lanka was an envied anomaly because of its ability to maintain such a relatively high standard of living despite its low Gross National Product per capita. Yet since 1983 over 60,000 have been killed in a violent, protracted, ethnicized conflict. In retrospect it is possible to identify critical junctures in the political life of the country which contributed to the sad spiral into violence. While a full account of this process is beyond the scope of the current study, the following events should be highlighted. The readers are referred to the references listed for further details and discussion. As in virtually all cases of violent "ethnic" conflict, violence was fuelled through the manipulation and politicization of group identities by individuals and organizations who have been labelled "political entrepreneurs" in the social movement literature.

In 1956 the constitutionally empowered government passed legislation which made Sinhala the official language, and effectively limited Tamil entry into the civil administration and commercial sectors. In the 1960s land irrigation and resettlement schemes moved Sinhalese populations into traditional Tamil majority areas which led to outbreaks of communal violence. In the 1970s, a quota system was introduced which restricted Tamil access to universities. The lack of educational opportunity for Tamil youth reduced employment opportunity and increased frustration, creating a pool of discontentment that was exploited by nascent secessionist organizations. A new constitution for the Republic of Sri Lanka was adopted in 1972, establishing the supremacy of Sinhalese culture and Buddhism faith, and generally marks the onset of the Tamil militant struggle and the ethnic war that continues to present day.

The Tamil militant movement is largely centred in the northern Jaffna peninsula. By the mid 1980s the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) emerged as the most powerful force from a group of five feuding Tamil paramilitary organizations. The implementation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)- described as draconian by the International Commission of Jurists- clamped down on the civilian population and led to an escalation in tit-for-tat violence between Sri Lanka military and Tamil paramilitaries in the Northern Province. A 1983 militant ambush of Sinhalese soldiers triggered riots against Tamil civilians in Colombo and elsewhere, leaving hundreds of civilians dead and thousands of Tamil families dispossessed of homes and businesses. Thousands of families fled to the North East and more than 135,000 refugees left for Tamil Nadu, India. Britain gave open visas to Tamil emigrants, marking the beginning of the Diaspora of Sri Lankan Tamils overseas. It is estimated that presently, for every Tamil residing in Sri Lanka, one is internally displaced and one now lives overseas.

There was an escalation of atrocities on both sides, with civilians being caught in the middle. This includes the Dollar and Kent Farms Massacre of 80 Sinhalese children, women and men in November 1984 and the shelling and aerial bombing of parts of the Northern Province. By mid-1985 the war was stalemated. Fratricidal power struggles ensued between militant groups and the LTTE secured greater dominance.

In 1987 the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Pact was signed. Under the terms of the Agreement Sri Lankan forces ceased operations and thousands of Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) were stationed in the Northeast to enforce a ceasefire, disarm the LTTE and lay the foundation for peace. But when Tamil groups did not lay down their arms fighting broke out against the IPKF; resulting in thousands of military and civilian casualties and tens of thousands more refugees. By 1991 the Tamil refugee population in India peaked at 210,000. In a bizarre turn of events, in 1989 the Sri Lankan government launched a covert policy to actively arm and equip the LTTE to expel the IPKF. War between Sri Lankan government forces and militants soon followed, triggered by events in the Batticaloa district of the Eastern Province and rapidly spread. Government armed forces re-enter the Eastern province and an active war front resumed in the North.

In 1994 Sri Lanka elected President Chandrika Kumaratunga and the People's Alliance Party on a platform of peace and negotiations with LTTE. There was a 100-day cessation of hostilities during negotiations, but talks broke down after the sinking of naval boats in Trincomalee by LTTE and the war's fiercest fighting ensued. A major military operation captured Jaffna in May 1996. An estimated one million people were displaced. Since the fall of Jaffna, high levels of fighting continue between tens of thousands of LTTE cadres and a Sri Lanka military organization that has swelled from the size of a ceremonial guard in 1948 to a full scale army. Militant tactics include suicide political assassinations and terrorist missions resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties. Overall, the ethnic war has claimed more than 60,000 lives, more than half of which are civilian: Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim. Since 1983 the Sri Lankan army has grown dramatically and more than \$1.5 billion US has been spent on defense, 20% of government revenues. Six percent of the island's Gross Domestic Product is spent on the war. There are growing problems raising sufficient army recruits, despite relatively lucrative wages (\$57 US monthly pay- \$145 in the combat zone, e.g. a Batticaloa posting).

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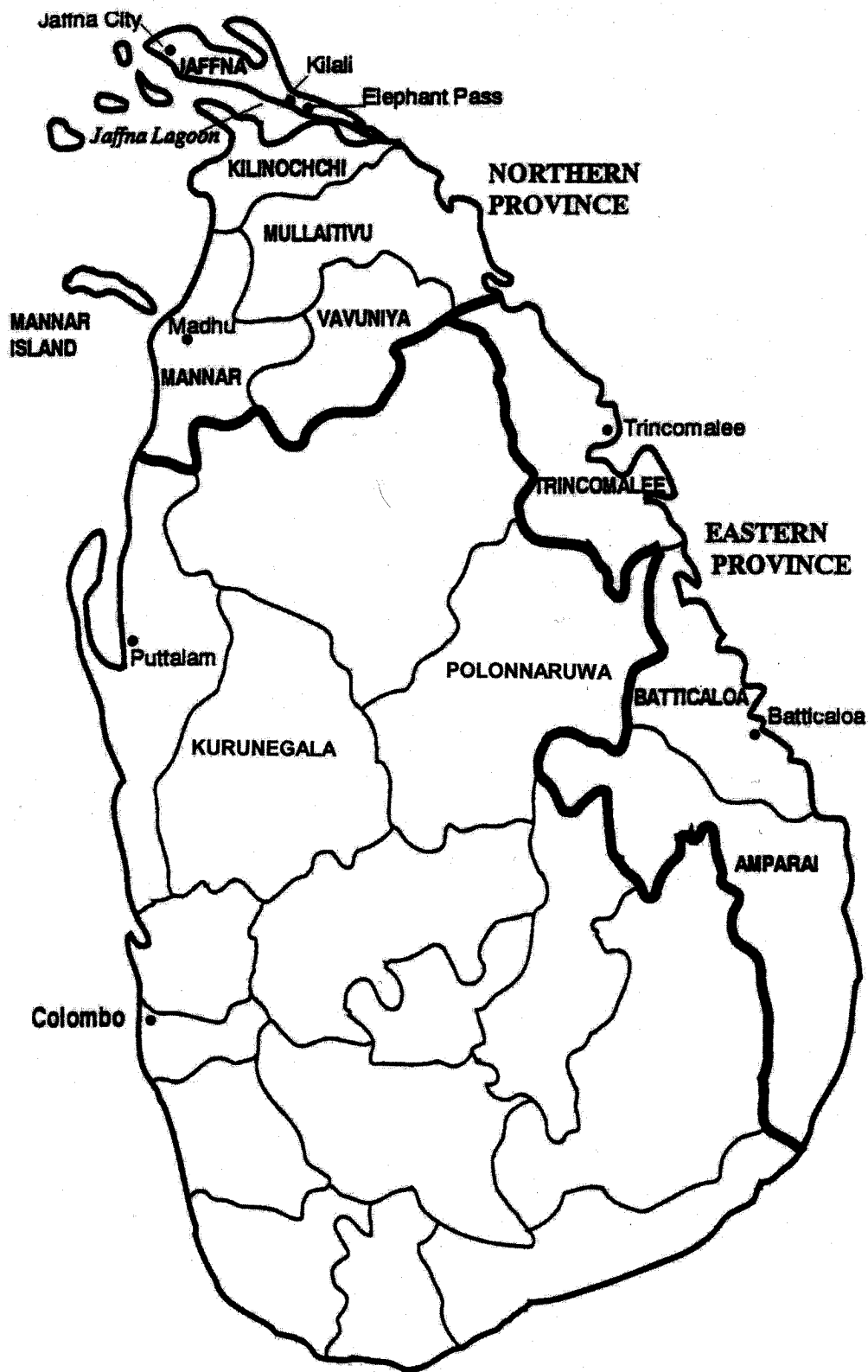


FIGURE 1: Map of Sri Lanka

### **1.3 Batticaloa district: the local context**

Batticaloa is one of two major towns on Sri Lanka's east coast, established at the tip of a long sandy peninsula between the sea and a large inland lagoon (photos 3 and 4). 80% of the district's population lives along the coast, with ethnic Muslim communities interspersed among Tamil, predominately Hindu ones along the peninsula. Major irrigation projects in the 1960s opened up interior lands for paddy cultivation by Tamils and resettled Sinhalese.

According to the 1981 census, Batticaloa district has a predominately rural population of 330,000, that includes the municipalities of Batticaloa (population 80,000) and the Muslim towns of Kattankudy (population 17,500) and Eravur (population 19,000). 70% of the population was ethnic Sri Lankan Tamil, 24% Moor (ethnic Muslim) and 3% Sinhalese- merchants, government officials and professionals, who by 1990 had largely fled the district.

### **1.4 Conflict History in Batticaloa**

While the most intense fighting has been in the North (Jaffna, Vavuniya, and Kilinochchi districts), the Eastern Province has been lower in intensity but nevertheless plays a crucial role in Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. Following the 1983 riots with border village massacres and communal attacks, the government sent 3,000 army, Special Task Forces (STF) and police to the Eastern province. The civilian death toll rose with the 1987-1990 IPKF occupation and with the resumption of fighting between militants and Sri Lankan government forces with incidents of rape and torture reported. Village killings, arbitrary detentions and large numbers disappearances of militant suspects and supporters have been documented.

A third of the Batticaloa population is ethnic Muslim (Tamil-speaking), Tamil-Muslim ethnic tensions became a divisive tool to undermine militant demands for a separate homeland or civil governance. In June 1990 50,000 Muslim civilians were forcibly expelled from the Jaffna peninsula, and in Batticaloa, there were orchestrated massacres in the Muslim towns of Kattankudy (108 men killed praying in the mosque) and Eravur (see Section II.4), along with abductions of Muslims travelling on the public buses. In waves of counter reprisals that followed, village attacks and killings have been perpetrated by many parties: militants, splinter groups, Muslim home guards, soldiers, Special Task Forces (STF) and police.

In Batticaloa the army, STF and police control most major thoroughfares and principal settlements along the coast for the past decade. The military stalemate in the Eastern Province has tens of thousands of government forces coming under sporadic attack from a few thousand militant cadres who control much of the interior territory and villages (the uncleared areas) which come under intermittent shelling. Road check points (photo 6) to search belongings and check compulsory identity cards, and night curfews are routine. Cordon and search operations (round-ups), travel restrictions, and arbitrary detentions have been commonplace, and there have been periods when forced labour, torture and disappearances have occurred. In many communities militant splinter factions and local gangs are a major source of violence.

### **1.5 Effect on the Batticaloa community and culture**

For the lifetime of Batticaloa's children, fear, violence and disruption has entered family life; no family has been spared the effects of the ethnic conflict. Thousands of families have been repeatedly displaced with the waves of fighting, shelling and displaced. The local economy is retracted and unemployment endemic. Prior to the 1990s, commerce and social relations between the non-Muslim Tamil and Muslim towns was relatively harmonious and interdependent. Since then traditional family life and livelihoods have been deeply affected. There are thousands of war widows, and unmarried women in villages thinned of men by violent death, disappearance, asylum seeking overseas, and recruitment into the militant struggle. Women-led households are common and facing poverty, thousands, mainly women, seek employment overseas in the Gulf States for a typical monthly wage of \$100 US. Some areas have high rates of malnutrition and little or no access to health and other services. Several international humanitarian relief organizations provide services and programs in the district.

From ancient history until the 1970s, traditional seasonal and many religious events were shared by all peoples of Batticaloa irrespective of ethnicity. Since the outbreak of war cultural life is very much segregated and contracted. In Muslim communities, religious and cultural fundamentalism has risen significantly. In the Hindu community temple rituals for the dead and disappeared take on added importance in the community life.

Suicide is very common- Sri Lanka's has one of the world's highest suicide rate: more than 7,000 a year- higher than the war's casualty rates, yet the official suicide registry excludes the Northeast where suicide

rates are apt to be higher. . The East is a major source of recruits to the militants' rank and file in the North and suicide squads. Depression, alcoholism and physical abuse in the home is common. Severe mental illness largely goes untreated without government or community social services.

The importance of education and literacy, for men and women, has been strongly upheld by Sri Lankan families, and throughout the district, cleared and uncleared, government maintains the school system, instructed in the Tamil language. While most children attend, for many households the costs of uniforms and books are prohibitive, and attendance is often haphazard. The district lags well behind the rest of the country in national competitive examinations and there is limited utility for higher education given the economy and dim prospects of post-secondary education. Teachers have limited or no training in child development and psychological support skills, and the use of corporal punishment in the classroom is common. Yet the local school is often the only government service for children and its potential to address the psychological and developmental needs of children should not be undervalued. This was the focus of work in the earlier Health Reach project out of which the Butterfly Garden developed as described in Section II.

## SECTION - II

### History of The Butterfly Garden in Batticaloa

This section describes the Health Reach project and the early phases of development that led to the Butterfly Garden Program.

#### II.1 The "Health of Children in War Zones Project": The Health Reach Study in Sri Lanka (1996)

In 1992 the Centre for International Health and Centre for Peace Studies at McMaster University, Canada co-sponsored the Health Reach program and in 1994 received Health Canada funding for the three year 'Health of Children in War Zones' project in support of the International Convention for the Rights of the Child. The mission of Health Reach was to "investigate and promote, within the framework of international covenants, the health and well-being of civilian populations and children in zones of armed conflict". Project work in former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Afghanistan focused on psychological distress in war affected children. Health Reach collaborated with local organizations in the respective countries to generate reliable information on the extent of the psychological needs of children and strengthen local capacities to address the problem. An additional dimension to Health Reach was formulated as "Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives", whereby initiatives to improve the well-being of children and reveal the direct and indirect effects of war could advance the prospects of peace building locally, nationally and internationally.<sup>2</sup>

During the 100-day cease-fire in 1995 the Health Reach team interviewed children in eight Sri Lankan communities affected by armed conflict: four Tamil in Batticaloa district, Eastern Province, and 4 Sinhalese communities in Polonnaruwa and Kurunegala districts. Each sample consisted of a Year 6 classroom of schoolchildren, 9-11 years old. Interviews with individual children took place over four-day period and included home visits to interview the child's primary female caregiver. The study projects methods, results and recommendations were published in Sri Lanka<sup>3</sup>, and in the medical literature<sup>4</sup>.

In Batticaloa, Rev Fr. Paul Satkunanayagam, psychological counsellor and director of the Batticaloa Professional Psychological Counselling Centre, co-supervised the activities of 30 female trainees who interviewed schoolchildren in Tamil and Muslim communities with local histories of conflict. Questionnaires and other means assessed exposure to armed conflict and the presence of post-traumatic psychological distress, grief and depression. Of the 170 children interviewed, 41% of the children had been personal victims of conflict related violence (homes attacked, being shot at, beaten, or arrested). 95% reported personally experiencing events of threatened death, serious injury, to be at risk of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): 92% of such events were conflict related, as distinct from e.g. domestic violence, accident, etc although many had been multiply affected from several sources. Based on a standardized index for child post-traumatic distress, one-fifth of the children scored in the severe / very severe range. Similar levels of severe depression and unresolved grief reactions were found. Many children disclosed events they had never shared previously due to reluctance and problems of disclosure to close family members.

Exposure to War Experience	% of children affected, Batticaloa (n=170)
disrupted schooling and displacement of home, multiple occasions	>90%
forced separation from parents (longer than one month)	15%
direct exposure to shelling, shooting and/or bombing	89%
extreme poverty and deprivation due to the war e.g. going without a home, food, or water	80%
seeing dead bodies	53%
direct family member killed by war fighting	15%
'disappearance' of family member (following abduction or detention, presumed dead)	19%

## **II.2 Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives:**

Health Reach sought to improve local community resources to address the needs of war affected children 'uncovered' during the project, an ethical commitment to be part of the solution beyond just identifying the extent of the problem. This extended beyond the 3 year funding of McMaster University's and required seeking other sources for a local Sri Lankan project<sup>5</sup>. The transition from a Canadian university sponsored survey project to a viable local program was a challenging but ultimately successful process.

## **II.3 The Spiral Garden, Bloorview MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre, Toronto, Canada**

The Health Reach Program and its four country projects consulted with many Canadian and international resources for ideas and models. The Sri Lankan team approached Paul Hogan, artist, and founding creative director of the Spiral Garden children's program at the Bloorview MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre, Toronto, Canada, a 40 bed rehabilitation hospital for children with physical disabilities. Since 1984, disabled children residing at the Centre, their siblings, and able-bodied children from the community have participated in the Spiral Garden program held each summer in an outdoor garden and play area, a sanctuary for the imagination and creative energy of children. The child-centred program involves small activity and interest-based groups in play, music, storytelling, art and drama facilitated by staff artists and volunteers. All aspects of the person- physical, emotional, spiritual, rational and intuitive- are integrated into the process. Through the cultivation of a garden world and practicing the arts, children develop personal social and creative skills. The Spiral Garden has received international recognition as an important and innovative rehabilitative experience and is highly popular with the children and their families. The Spiral Garden has continues to be a vital part of Bloorview Macmillan's summer programming and a new site, the Cosmic Birdfeeder, based on the Spiral Garden model has been growing and flourishing since 1997

### **Health Reach- Spiral Garden exploratory workshops**

In May 1994 a two week experiential workshop was conducted with Health Reach associates from Sri Lanka, on the 'Spiral Garden approach' to child based creative play, exploring how it might be adapted to the Sri Lankan context for war affected children. The 'strengths' of the Spiral Garden model in the context of war affected children in Sri Lanka were felt to be:

- War affected children have little opportunity for creative play and would respond well to opportunities offered by a 'garden program' in Sri Lanka.
- The Spiral Garden has positive impact on children and inspires family members and other who witness the changes.
- Cultivating an natural environmental garden setting as a 'zone of peace' for children is a visible expression of the importance of being free from fear and violence to which children would respond well, and armed combatants would respect.
- The Spiral Garden's work with children with physical disabilities was felt to be adaptable to the needs of the war affected Sri Lankan children (trauma healing and community reconciliation among differing ethnic groups).
- The approach is a non-medical, non-stigmatizing creative process with definite advantages over conventional Western psychological models of trauma therapy in a Sri Lankan context.

Later that year, Paul Hogan went to Sri Lanka on an exploratory mission and held presentations in Colombo with Health Reach project partners (Family Rehabilitation Centre) and workshops with 40 play-group workers. He consulted with mental health professionals, visual and theatrical artists and academics, and funders, briefing them on the Spiral Garden approach and developed a directory of resource people in Sri Lanka interested in a creative garden project for children.

Unrelated to developments in Batticaloa, these explorations led to a pilot program in Colombo called Serunguli Walakale ('Kites and Clouds') initiated by volunteering artists and community workers, run out of donated space at the Dehiwala Zoo for Sinhalese refugee and street children. Kites and Clouds lasted for about a year but eventually was not sustainable as a volunteer initiative.

## **II.4 Early Stages of the Butterfly Garden in Batticaloa**

In Batticaloa Paul Hogan visited orphanage centres and held a public forum "The Spiral Garden in Sri Lanka: Healing the Children, Healing the Earth" attended by more than 50 invitees. He described the Spiral Garden as a holistic model of rehabilitation embracing the physical, psychological, social and ecological, a child-centred and earth-centred approach whereby programming content emerges from the

imagination of the child and from the garden itself. The self-generation of culture emerging from the process affirms and strengthens community. "Just as the fruits of war are realized in violence and destruction, the seeds of peace are sown with simple acts of caring and creativity. The garden is a zone of peace dedicated to the cultivating of a caring and connected community"<sup>6</sup>. A two-day workshop was held with a core group of ten participants to explore the experiential and theoretical aspects of the Spiral Garden approach.

#### **II.4.1 Pilot-testing a play program**

Paul's explorations coincided with the Health Reach project's survey fieldwork interviewing school children. Two of the Batticaloa communities were the adjacent war-affected towns of Muslim Eravur and Tamil Chenkalady. In July 1990 armed militants entered Eravur occupied a mosque at night. In a deceptive ploy, villagers were summoned by loudspeakers, urging them to gather at the mosque, whereupon 125 villagers were killed by gunfire. This was one of largest massacres in the district, triggering Tamil-Muslim communal violence lasting for months, Chenkalady came under counterattack and leaving a no-man's-land of destroyed homes between communities [photo 7 and 8].

The Health Reach survey afforded an opportunity to trial play activities for children in both communities, their schools less than one kilometre apart. Two weeks after their interviews, an afternoon program of storytelling and play activities were held for the 40 children in each community. The events bridged the experience of disclosing inner distress and painful life experiences, with play and animated storytelling. These events, both 'a gift of thanks' for the children at the same time as a pilot test of play activities with war affected children, were felt to be very successful.

#### **II.4.2 A site for Vannathupoochi Poonga (The Butterfly Garden): Canada Fund proposal (1995)**

At that time, Fr. Paul Satkunanayagam invited the Health Reach team to inspect a 2-acre neglected lot behind St. Michael's College school, where various animals had been turned out and boys in an orphanage maintained a roost of laying hens, and proposed it as a site for a children's garden program. In the next year Paul Hogan, Father Paul and a steering committee representing different ethnic groups submitted a proposal to the Canada Fund, Canadian High Commission to reconstruct the site and trial a play program: [photo 9 and 10].

"Vannathupoochi Poonga" (The Butterfly Garden) is a community-based psycho social intervention model for children who participated in the McMaster University's Health Reach Sri Lanka Field Study as well as children from Vidya Jothy, and Shanti Bhawan orphanages who come from different parts of the Eastern Province.

"Vannathupoochi Poonga" is modeled on the Spiral Garden which has been pioneering innovative programs in children's rehabilitation... By joining the practice of gardening with play and the cultivation of the arts, the Butterfly Garden articulates a new paradigm which extends the notion of rehabilitation beyond the physical to the emotional and ecological. The garden teaches the importance of caring not only for the earth but for oneself and others... "Earth work- Art work- Heart work-Healing".

The donated property for Vannathupoochi Poonga is adjacent to St. Michael's College in Batticaloa town. The butterfly is universally recognized as a symbol for beauty, joy, transformation and hope as well as for diversity in oneness. The property is comprised of 34 mature trees many of which are fruit-bearing and a variety of animals and reptiles currently part of a small zoo for the orphaned children. The site was selected for its availability, natural beauty, centrality, security and seclusion as well as for its connection with the Professional Psychological Counseling Centre.

Radiating out from the Batticaloa Butterfly Garden to nearby villages will be play programs facilitated by trainees from the Butterfly "Garden working in conjunction with "Barefoot Counselors" trained during the Health Reach project.

In the future, a special "Butterfly Bus" will transport the children and the animators to/from the outlying villages to participate in programs. The garden will also act as sanctuary for wounded birds and animals in whose rehabilitation the children can participate. Plans are underway to recognize this site as well as other possible Spiral Garden sites in Colombo and Jaffna, as "Zones of Peace for Children" It is hoped that the pilot project "Spiral Garden/Butterfly Garden will be a model for other emerging sites island-wide in future. (excerpted from the Canada Fund proposal 1995).

The objectives of the one year reconstruction and start-up project were:

1. To pilot an innovative psycho-social intervention model for children affected by conflict-related violence, the principle of which may be adapted for other site-specific settings and needs.



2. To promote a national exchange of ideas in the arts, environment, health and well-being of individuals and to foster respect and tolerance of diversity through peace garden projects.
3. To facilitate a healing process through creative expression aimed at lessening cyclical violence in the society.

In addition to the Canada Fund support, these early stages were supported by the remnants of Health Reach funding, volunteer time and private donations raised through the 'FOGhorn' (Friends of the Garden newsletter) in Canada, Sri Lanka Canada Development Fund. Phase I, Reconstruction and Preparation began March 1996. Then in the early months Stichting Humanistisch Instituut Voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (HIVOS, Netherlands) became a co-funder of Phase I and thenceforth the principal funder of the Butterfly Garden.

#### **II.4.3 The Butterfly Garden: Mission and Objectives**

In September 1996, the Butterfly Garden opened its gates and "began to accompany children of Batticaloa District on their long journey back home to security, sanity and a sense of well-being":

Little work like this had been done by anyone on this country or elsewhere. There were no models. Donor aid, where directed to children in war, addressed the child's urgent physical needs but long-term psychological healing was left unappraised [perhaps because] the subtle and intricate nature of psychological healing does not lend itself easily to the calculus of development and humanitarian aid projects. In its funders the Butterfly Garden has found allies willing to take risks with their funding realizing, perhaps, how very urgent the need is to find innovative models that will at least begin to address the psychological healing of children in war zones.<sup>7</sup>

The Butterfly Garden's vision is to provide children affected by armed conflict in the Batticaloa District with a sanctuary where they can heal through engaging their creativity in play, artwork and earthwork. By making and mending in the Butterfly Garden they can become healers in their communities and in the world at large.

#### **Mission**

1. We will create a centre of healing called the Butterfly Garden for children who have experienced the trauma of conflict in the Batticaloa area.
2. The Butterfly Garden will be a center of imagination where, through the sensitive accompaniment of local children, we will guide animators in learning a sustainable discipline of healing through personal engagement with the child in an integrated model which combines play activities, the arts and counseling.
3. Animators will accompany the children who come into our care through their formative years by creating small local gardens in their villages where the peaceful and creative processes of the Butterfly Garden can deepen and mature.
4. We will join our efforts with like-minded peacemaker / artists throughout the country and internationally in order to help create practical and innovative models for the healing of children suffering from the trauma of war.

#### **Objectives**

##### **Long-term Objectives**

1. At the level of the child, we seek to heal the wound of children exposed to the trauma of war
2. At the level of the community, we seek to promote reconciliation and nurture the seeds of peace.

##### **Short-term Objectives**

1. Program facilitation at the Butterfly Garden.
2. Community Outreach.
3. Accompaniment of Children in Healing from War-related Trauma.
4. Staff Capacity Building.
5. Management for Sustainability.

6. EIC (Education, Information, Communication) Media Unit.
7. Publication. (in 3 languages - Tamil, Sinhala, English)
8. Site Maintenance.

The Butterfly Garden began providing after-school and weekend programming (four days a week) to groups of approximately 50 children, attending on a weekly basis for a nine month program cycle. Within each group, children are from different villages, roughly equal parts Tamil and Muslim, boys and girls. In the first cycle, children were those who participated in the Health Reach study (Eravur, Chenkalady, Palamunai) and from three nearby orphanages, 150 altogether. In the second cycle, new groups of schoolchildren came from Eravur, Koddaimunai, Kudiyruppu, Kankeyenodai, Manchantoduwai, and Poonochimunai as well as from orphanages. The map below lists the schools participating in the four program cycles up to the spring of 2000 (figure 2).

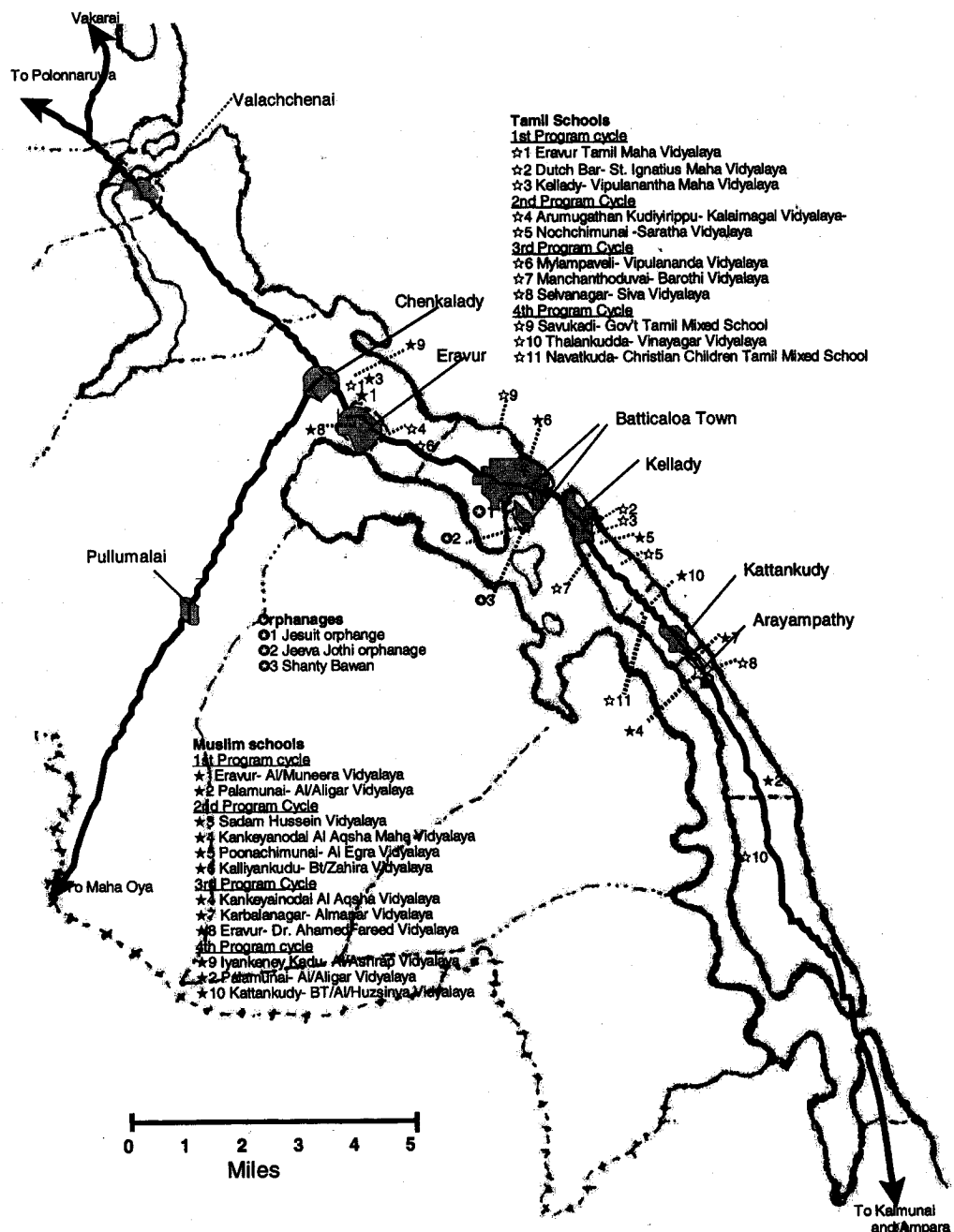


FIGURE 2: Map of Batticaloa District and Participating Schools

## SECTION - III

### An Overview of The Butterfly Garden

#### III. 1 The site

The Butterfly Garden is a 1-2 acre walled compound behind St. Michael's College located in the town of Batticaloa. The site has open areas with grass and sand, and a dozen large shade trees. Several open air buildings are for group gatherings, crafts, drama and other functions: two craft activity centres with benches and large tables under circular thatched roofs; a two story tree fort built in one of the tallest trees accessed by a staircase; and a large square sandpit under a trellis of broad-leafed vines. A 30 foot boat mounted on posts is a favourite play area and performance stage. In and around the compound tame animals and birds wander about, including two small donkeys, an elk, rabbits, a pelican, ducks and geese.

The Butterfly Garden's main entrance is a light blue coloured double gate built in the west wall of the compound, a circular mandala made with four butterflies [photo on title page]. Signs by the gate in English and Tamil declare the place a 'zone of peace' for children and read:

If you consider the world of God, it is the world of children  
If you consider the garden of God, it is the garden of children.  
If you consider how in the world we ought to live , then pay  
A visit to the place where playing are the children.<sup>8</sup>

The public enters through the gate in the off hours to stroll and enjoy the quiet, and on program days, the Butterfly bus enters bringing the children from the village schools. Inside to the left of the gate is the open-sided garage for the Bus on top of which is the Cuckoo's Cloud, a large wooden floored thatched-roofed room for guided activities with groups of children [photo 56].

To the right of the gate along the south side of the compound is the Amma Cabana (Mother Hut), a raised round platform with a circle of poles supporting a high thatched roof, with capacity for 50 children [photo 11]. Next to it is a secluded garden of flowers, herbs, and smaller trees behind a palmyra fence to protect them from animals. Inside the garden is a small platform and a quiet sitting area with a statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Many children like to spend time with Mr. Palani the garden's elderly caretaker who is a good storyteller [photo 57]. Next to the garden is Rat Snake Mountain a round grassy knoll fifteen feet high under which there runs a large tunnel of concrete culvert.

On the east side of the hill is the enclosed garden area and in the Southeast corner is the Cuckoo's Nest [photo 12]. This area is dedicated to the Amma Appa Journey (Mother-Father-Journey), reflective and healing work with children (described in Section V). It is generally respected as the place for quiet reflection. The Cuckoo's Nest is a raised platform with a thatched roof supported by four large posts inside an enclosure with a small gate and footpath within. This is where the Amma Appa Game (mother-father game) is conducted, an interactive session with a child and guide that begins with constructing the child's kinship and household diagram (genogram), with cards and symbols on a colourful mat [photo 41-44]. From the Cuckoo's Nest extends a raised wooden walkway to the Cuckoo's Chariot next door [photo 40], a child-sized two-story hut, mounted on two large stationary ox-cart wheels, where children have one-on-one sessions with an animator serving as a creative art companion.

Built along the east wall are a series of room-sized cages with large fenced fronts housing various birds and animals who normally roam freely in the garden during the day. Along the north wall adjacent to St. Michael's College is the kitchen area for preparing lunch, tea and washing dishes, a staff room with locker space, and a gallery room for exhibits and indoor activities. The Butterfly Garden's office has a window looking into the compound but has its separate entrance from outside the compound. Towards the other end of the wall are the water closets and the storage room for the arts and craft materials, costumes, and musical instruments.

#### III.1.1 Animal Life in the Butterfly Garden

The Butterfly Garden took over custody of many of the animals that were caged or set out to pasture at the site, including crocodiles, large snakes, deer, herons and monkeys. Providing decent living conditions and care was a priority, for their well-being and as an example to the children, for whom they give delight, curiosity, and insight: the creatures figure prominently in their artwork and stories<sup>9</sup>. Most were found wounded and given to the Garden for rehabilitation; some who remain when efforts to restore their ability to fly or care for themselves are unsuccessful. The animals in the Garden are often a source of inspiration and imagination for the children.

*Perhaps they are inviting us to give regard and respect to the earth and the diverse community of beings who inhabit it, and to look more attentively at how we all depend upon one another for mutual well-being. Through developing a more compassionate and caring relationship with them, we can sensitize our eyes, our hearts, all our organs of perception to the space itself and all its particularities.*

*We can become more present to the garden by emptying ourselves of preconception and by opening to others, including the non-human others, who dwell there. Since our healing, indeed our survival, as a species depends upon it, we can learn to listen more compassionately to what the earth is trying to say in our little corner of chaos. The best procedure now "might be to consider that we need not a human answer to an earth problem, but an earth answer to an earth problem. The earth will solve its problems and possibly our own, if we will let the earth function in its own ways." (Thomas Berry) In the Garden, we study and school ourselves in the earth's ways and the ways of its creatures so that, hopefully, we can find our place again within the natural community.*

*Simply by being fully present to the gifts of creation in the garden and by responding sensitively and compassionately to them, we promote healing throughout the local community and even further afield. This is how the healing of the Butterfly Garden begins: first, by doing no harm (as in the ancient medical caution: primum nihil nocere) and then by surrendering and giving continuous attention to the other, beginning with the site itself.*

### **III.2 The Butterfly Garden Staff**

The Butterfly Garden staff consists of more than a dozen people in various capacities of director, advisory, program management and personnel: animators, caretakers, and logistical support. Management includes the director and a full-time office manager since 1998 who also oversees the community outreach program.

The director of the Butterfly Garden is Reverend Fr. Paul Satkunanayagam, a Jesuit father and teacher at St. Michael's College, and a trained psychological counsellor. He is founding director of the Batticaloa Professional Psychological Counselling Centre and a research partner in the McMaster University Health Reach project. Fr. Paul is a native of Batticaloa who grew up in a Hindu village in the 1940s and 50s and ordained as a priest to minister in Batticaloa. He studied in the U.S. with a Masters of Education at Loyola University, Chicago in 1972, majoring in counselling and guidance. He later received an MA in Counselling Psychology which included 2 years practical experience in a Chicago high school counselling department until 1976. He returned to Batticaloa and has been here throughout the years of war. In 1993 he established the Professional Psychological Counselling Centre in Batticaloa<sup>10</sup>, to provide counselling services to torture victims and ex-detainees, and their families.. He oversees several orphanage homes. The 1996 Health Reach study was his first opportunity working as a counsellor with war affected children, and out of this interest, he was instrumental in establishing the Butterfly Garden.

The Butterfly Garden's creative founder is Paul Hogan, a visual artist and writer. A native of Toronto, Canada, he was a founding artist of the Spiral Garden in 1984, a program for children with disabilities at Bloorview MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre. His writings on the work of him and others to develop an ecological approach to rehabilitation through awakening the innate creativity of children is published elsewhere<sup>11</sup>. To the children in the Garden, he is known as Kattadi Ayah, 'Sir Windy'.

The program also has a group of resource people who have been conducted training workshops and serve as consultants in program development. This includes: Ken Bush PhD Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University; Rob Chase MD Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba, Canada; Ms. Barbara Dametto MA interdisciplinary art education; Dr. Allison Eyre MD, Colombo; Pat Lawrence PhD, Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado; Jan Mackie, Spiral Garden, Toronto; Rev CP Rajendram PhD Media and Communications, Trincomalee; Chitra Sekhar MA, play therapist, YMCA, Ottawa; John Van Eenwyk PhD, Jungian psychoanalyst Dept of Psychology, Washington State University, and Dr. Daya Somasunderum MD psychiatrist, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

#### **III.2.1 The animators**

The mainstay of the program are the 12 full-time animators who organize the activity sessions and accompany the children in their exploration of arts, crafts, drama, and creative play. Staff were hired based on experience and talent in the arts, skills with children, and consideration for representation of different ethnic groups overall. As young adults they have mostly lived in Batticaloa and know from direct experience war's effects on the communities, families and personal lives of the children.

Animators have secondary education and some have vocational training in trades or performing arts, but they have no formal training in psychological counselling, child development, etc. Their skills have developed over 2-3 years working at the Butterfly Garden, and from training workshops held a few times a year with visiting resource people and visiting child therapists, psychoanalysts, professional clowns and performers.

In the Garden program, animators prepare and tend activities sessions (1-3 hours in length) with groups of up to twelve children. They observe children having difficulties, facilitate non-violent conflict resolution, and perform many practical tasks running the program: serving lunch, preparing art supplies, organizing schedules, etc. Children get to know well other people at the Butterfly Garden, such as the driver of the Butterfly Bus and caretakers of the animals and gardens and a few volunteers and trainees who assist the animators. In a short time, the children begin feeling at home in the Garden and develop personal relationships and patterns with the site and staff, integral to their for creative play and discovery.

*An animator quickens the life of the spirit (L. anima) and revitalizes the life of the soul. In playing together the simplicity of the child combines with the subtle strength of the animator. The animator must train himself to be fully present to the child and to be generous and gentle on these occasions of interaction so that the child can simply be herself and engage her own spirit and originality without fear of reprimand. As a catalyst for this process the animator must be in touch with his own originality, and allow, nourish and sustain the child's experience of his own imagination and goodness by following the child's lead in creating daily programs and activities.*

*Ironically, since the very reason for the existence of the Butterfly Garden is the healing of children affected by war, it is the children themselves who are the primary bearers of healing. Most adults who come to the garden, whether as animators, administrators, experts or divines carry more inimical psychological and cultural baggage with them than do the children. They long ago stopped playing and started planning, projecting and prevaricating. It is for this reason that the pedagogical approach of the garden focuses on generating creative experience for animators based on encounters outside their immediate frame of reference. By directly engaging with the unknown in the practice of painting, theater, story invention and other arts they reconnect with the creative integrity of their own childhood – they learn to play again. It is only through the first-hand experience of their own originality that they will be able to inspire, cultivate, and encourage the originality of the children to blossom and grow.*

*Through imaginative exercises of this kind, through improvisation games, through making art and theater, the animators relax with ambiguity and develop trust in their own imaginations and healing processes. They become more accepting, more "as little children" themselves, and thus they are better disposed to play with the children as well as prepare and organize activities for them. They learn not to judge their own or other people's capacity for change. They come to realize experientially how self-emptying opens psychic space and how - sometimes but not always - miracles occur within that space: ordinary miracles such as songs, paintings, plays, laughter, friendship, and a renewed sense of confidence and peace. These are signs for all to see. They are seeds of hope.*

*Poetic practices and rituals which enliven the soul and open the animator to the flow of her creative intelligence are supported by a way of behaving within the garden which optimizes its creative and healing capacity in spite of ambient war conditions. The policies articulated in the Code of Conduct of the Butterfly Garden were shaped by the animators themselves over time. Conventions such as the Medicine Circle and the Council of Four Consultors give the animators tools with which to prevent and resolve conflicts. There are many other structures that have evolved over time, some original, some adapted from other sources, which help animators actualize the peacemaking vision of the Butterfly Garden.*

### **III.3 The Children:**

In the course of the first three program cycles (September 1996- May 1999), approximately 500 children have attended the Butterfly Garden. Initially they came from three schools (one Tamil, two Muslim) from the Health Reach study, from local orphanages in Batticaloa town. Another 17 schools in the locality requested or were approached by the Butterfly Garden. In each case the principal invites the Garden make a presentation of the program to teachers, who later select children with school or home difficulties e.g. family loss, household displacement or personal war experience. The school then contacts parents of the children for permission for the child to attend after school.

Children attend on a weekly basis over for a nine month program cycle: all day on Saturdays, Sundays or on two half-days (Thursday and Friday after school). They are picked up and dropped off at their school by the Butterfly Bus [photo 53-56]. A lunch meal is provided on full day sessions. On a given day, approximately 50 children attend, coming from 3-4 different schools, boys and girls, Tamils and Muslims in equal numbers, to play and learn together over several months. The case studies in Section VII provide more details on individual children in the form of case studies.

With the completion of the fourth program cycle in 1999 as described above, those who attended earlier cycles now return for another 'session' but of shorter duration. Activities will adapt to the children growing older and to the development of community programming in 'satellite' garden sites (see Section VI).

### **III.4 The Activity Program**

On a typical program day at the Butterfly Garden, 50 children disembark from the Butterfly Bus and excitedly reacquaint themselves with the garden, its resident animals (donkeys, monkeys, geese, turkey

hens, snakes, deer) and the animators. A conch horn calls them all to gather and be welcomed. This includes a shared moment of silence to think of peace in their own way [photo 21].

Then the animators describe and show examples of the activities children can choose from that day, typically 3-5 different kinds, such as making puppets, costumes, musical instruments, drama, as they please. Some activities continue and evolve from prior sessions. (See Section IV.2 about Play). They may also choose sessions in the Cuckoo's Cloud, for more reflective and structured activities (2nd Spiral Animations, see Section V.5). On a given day 'Cuckoo Daddy; (Fr. Paul's Garden nickname) may conduct sessions in the Cuckoo's Nest with one or a few children. Children decide for themselves what they wish to do. Those children attending for a whole day are provided a full lunch with activities resuming in the afternoon. The day's program ends with a closing circle, when children and animators gather together, for children to display some of their achievements, to watch a skit performed, to sing a few songs and say good-bye until the next session [photo 15,34,62]. Then it's time to load up the bus to take them back to their villages (often an hour of travelling).



## SECTION IV

### Principles of the Butterfly Garden:

The Butterfly Garden is a zone of peace for children, where the ethos of war and destruction is consciously and continuously replaced with one of gentleness and creation. [Butterfly Garden brochure:]

#### IV.1 Earthwork / Art work / Heart work / Healing: Self-Integration through Creativity

Our name carries our vision: Butterfly- a symbol of beauty, love, impermanence, imagination, transformation, oneness in diversity; Garden- a symbol of healing, nourishment and care. The patterns, processes and rhythms of the natural world not only provide a meaningful context for rehabilitation- they are themselves healing. Imaginative engagement with these natural phenomena enhances their healing effect. Through engaging in a process of Earthwork / Artwork / Heartwork / Healing in which play, the practice of gardening, the care of animals and the cultivation of the arts are combined, both the children and adults mend and re-connect their inner and outer world. The Butterfly Garden provides both an opportunity and a sanctuary for the practice of peace and reconciliation. The garden gives children who have suffered the horror and hopelessness of war an opportunity to discover themselves anew. In their own hands, hearts, intelligence and imagination they find the seeds of peace and the possibility of shaping a new world together. [Butterfly Garden brochure:]

From manual tending of gardens and animals, through creative expression, to psychological transformation, this step-wise progression maps out the Butterfly Garden's 'method' of psychological growth and re-integration. Where inner distress is from traumatic experience or loss, this constitutes a form of trauma healing.

**Earthwork** is to engage directly with one's physical environment. A garden needs regular watering and care, or else plants will shrivel and die. The physical world teaches many lessons about cause and effect, life and death, beauty and mystery. Children naturally observe and engage with the plants, animals and environment in the Butterfly Garden. Many are from poverty stricken homes such as in resettlement camps with little or no possessions [photo 51]. Children are often initially awe-struck to find such diverse spaces with intriguing animals and birds to explore and play. They soon develop a relationship to the Garden, animals and staff, and discover in the process new aspects within themselves: this can be transformational and healing.

As the children learn to care for and respect the Garden, it becomes sacred for the spirit of the children ('sacralization of space'). Children are responsive to the special quality of the place. The intentioned presence and the animators' respect for the children is substrate for inspiration and trust. Within a short time, many children whose conduct may be destructive, violent or cruel, e.g. throwing stones at animals, and stealing from other children, is much tempered and new ways of relating to others emerge.

*Insight (into healing) begins in site. We maintain and take care of the garden space as though it is a person with whom we are totally intimate, totally familiar and free. We touch the earth and one another with gentleness and love. From there the resonance of this loving kindness expands renewing all those who enter its ambience. To overcome the death all around we replace I with Thou. I am the garden and the garden is me. We share the same soul. "The idea of an anima mundi (ensouled world) translates into a care of all things. Tasks seen mainly as duties, or penalties – cleaning up, detoxification, repair, scrubbing, recycling – become models for a therapeutic and aesthetic idea of service." <sup>12</sup> The garden path is one of joyful surrender and service.*

**Artwork:** Inspired by a place of natural beauty and delight, children are encouraged to explore and express the creative energy within themselves. This may be their first time to e.g. paint with different colours, play a musical instrument, or act in a fanciful skit. The animators facilitate this by preparing the activities, helping and encouraging the child without being overly directive. Most children naturally engage in creative play and explorations. The process is open-ended, activities flowing with the conversations, friendships, and spontaneous storytelling. New ideas emerge from the creative imagination of children playing together, sharing feelings and experiences. For the staff, this is a process of accompaniment, rather than leading or controlling.

**Heartwork:** Children will often raise questions and tensions vital to their own need for growth. The animator is there to 'hold the space' and recognize when such opportunities arise and allow them to occur. This can, appropriately, be likened to the artist developing a rapport with their 'muse' or 'daemon'.

When children with inner distress and suffering sense enough trust to develop relationship with their environment and aspects within themselves, life themes and feelings find expression in the creative process, and with it opportunities for healing. This is the principle by which the Butterfly Garden approaches 'trauma-healing'.

#### **Healing:**

*The Butterfly Garden is a place where one thing happens simultaneously, multi-variously. That one thing is healing. "Healing cannot arise until we bear witness to the suffering. If we do this, even places of the greatest suffering can be places of great healing" It is an ongoing process that never is complete. Nothing is ever "healed" absolutely. There are no silver bullets, no magic cures -- but there is care. Within the intimacy of each gesture and exchange we are allowed the opportunity of making whole and healing, creating and giving life, or alternatively, of denying and destroying it. The choice is always there: "suffering is optional" as is healing. Within the playing fields of the garden, within its living theater and art, percolate infinite possibilities for bringing healing into our own and others' lives. What is required of animators is a fundamental commitment to actualize this process, fortified by mindfulness, wise apprehension of energies as they are unfolding, and a willingness to surrender totally to "lila", the divine play.*

In psychological terms, trauma (greek. 'wound') is the emotional and cognitive shock following a deeply stressful event. Faced with great fear or sudden loss, an individual's resiliency fails, especially if trust and the child's sense of order in the world and self are overwhelmed. A traumatized psyche is often marked by personality change, neurotic mental states, depression and anxiety. Children may be particularly vulnerable, given their formative and dependent relationship to their surroundings and close ones. 'Trauma healing' typically refers to psychological therapeutic techniques for individuals with post-traumatic intrusive memories and distressing symptoms triggered by associations to the traumatic event. While a high percentage of children attending the Butterfly Garden have traumatized psyches (as evidenced in the Health Reach study and the case studies in Section VII), 'trauma-healing' is too narrow a descriptor of the methods of healing inner distress. The approach does not fixate on a specific traumatic event (as do the methods of cognitive therapy), unless the child so feels the need or impulse.

The Butterfly Garden emphasizes those aspects of the child's psyche which are still vital and growing without denying the traumatic history of the child and unnecessarily reinforcing the pathology and victimization. It offers rich opportunities for psycho-dynamic expression, of feelings, memories and tensions which may be the self-same sources of the child's inner distress. Artistic engagement with images and symbols facilitates expression and transformation of unconscious material. This process is essential for personal growth and integration of life experience, irrespective of the positive or negative valence of the symbol. Through it, healing occurs. This is an aspect of what Paul Hogan calls "Presence of Poesia as the Practice of Peace"

***Presence:** The Butterfly Garden is a place of return for the exile, for the uprooted and the displaced. It is a place of home-coming, particularly for children. The war, the daily struggle to survive, poverty, homelessness and the desperation attendant to it -- these diminish and weaken spirit to the point of exhaustion and despair. Wherever possible we must begin again. We must allow ourselves time and space to heal, developing positive and resilient coping strategies. We must tend to ourselves as the doctor, mend ourselves as the medicine itself. In order to do this, first and foremost we must return home, becoming fully present to ourselves and our community as they are. There is nowhere to run and hide. There is no one who will fix the mess we are in, although there are helpers, inner and outer, who accompany us along the way. We must learn to listen deeply and attentively to our inner voices and visions. By giving expression to these emanations of ourselves we begin to see who we are and find strength in our possibilities once again. There is no substitute for person and presence, for community and connection. By being in communion with oneself and others, healing relationships can replace dysfunctional ones. Communication, inner and outer, ongoing and open, brings understanding and accommodation.*

***Poesia:** through imagination, engaging oneself in the making of living art -- story, painting, sculpture, music, song, dance, theater, etc. This means bringing one's personal creativity to bear in an encounter with the unknown. Out of this encounter arises an confirming experience of the process through which creative intelligence works in the world. The opening of oneself to this creative intelligence through exercises of the imagination brings with it a new kind of confidence in handling life situations which, of their very nature, include contradiction, conflict, chaos.*

*As space opens up, new configurations of energy constellate which allow one to move into healthier ways of being. The ultimate goal of this transformative process is an enlargement of imagination for all the people. Balance, a sense of well-being and indeed, blessing, can be generated through contact with the deep ecology of creation. By aligning ourselves with this creativity through the gift of art we can experience healing in our lives. Poesia, however, is not panacea. It merely clears the ground for new energy to emerge.*

## IV.2 The Three Spirals of Play

The different levels of engaging with children in play are described in the Butterfly Garden terminology as the Three Spirals of Animation. The schematic matrix articulates how the program engages with the child as an individual, through to working at a community level, and becoming a vehicle of community reconciliation in the villages.

First Spiral Animation is object-centred play; engaging the senses- hands, eyes, ears, an introductory activity as the child gets acquainted to the Garden, and children and animators get to know each other. For staff, the intent is to be present for the child immersed in the activity.

*The animation process happens in three stages, which can be regarded as interconnected turnings of a wheel or spirals of animation. The 1st Spiral of Animation brings animator and child together for the first time. Since the children are unsure of where they are and why they are there; since the animator is a stranger to the child and the history of the child is, at this point, unknown to the animator; since the garden is a play space but not quite the same as a park, or a schoolyard or a cricket pitch or back lane, there must be a period of orientation and acquaintance-making at the beginning of each 9-month incubation cycle for children. Simple art and craft activities using commonplace media like mud, clay, cane, leaves, straw, sea shells, paper, paint, recycled fabric and plastic containers are introduced and methodically programmed on a weekly basis. The children make Butterfly Garden ID cards which provide a playful counterpoint to the ubiquitous national identity card. This cosmic ID identifies its bearer as a Butterfly Garden child, someone who is, in her very humble but by no means insignificant personage, a messenger of hope and creation in the crucible of conflict. Through various simple art and theater exercises the children are introduced to the plants and animals who co-habit the garden space with them and who become their mentors and guides in the story-world of the garden. They learn to make up songs and music of their own, realizing perhaps for the first time that, although everything in the world maybe interconnected and dependent upon everything else, there is plenty of room for originality and difference. Copying, rote learning, servile and conforming behavior, all dubious social skills acquired in the institutional world outside have minimal utility in the dream world of the garden where the normal character traits of childhood - spontaneity, curiosity, playfulness, and imagination - are encouraged and allowed. This does not mean that there is no structure or discipline but the logic and rhythm of the garden is based on the wisdom of the child and not the convenience of the adult. This 1st Spiral of Animation aims at building comfort and confident creativity in the child. The pictures, puppets, masks, sculptures and toys they make are theirs to do with as they wish. They may keep them, exchange them with one another, give them to the garden gallery, to family or friend. It is hoped that their first few months in the garden bestows upon the children confirmation of their original goodness and confidence in the brilliant works of their imagination.*

Second Spiral Animation is more psychodynamic. It may involve purposeful focus on themes e.g. identity, family, hopes and fears. It is often multidisciplinary- e.g. combining story telling, art and drama. Staff 'accompany' children as they explore more archetypal/ psychologically deeper explorations. Examples are Cuckoo's Nest sessions with the Amma Appa Game and the Cuckoo's Cloud, (see Section V). Second Spiral extends to expressions on a grand scale, such as the major dramas that all children team together to perform collectively at the end of the program cycle.

*The 2nd Spiral of Animation takes this burgeoning confidence in creation and shares it among all the children. Inter-disciplinary collaborative projects are introduced, usually during the last three months of the 9 month incubation period. Painting and sculpture projects become more complex, with pieces made at one activity center combined with parts made at another, to produce a third hybrid piece which then becomes the collective property of the garden, where it might be installed as a banner or sculpture or used as a prop in the theater. Since story is pivotal in structuring the programs of the garden, very often a story invented by the children at the Mud Mountain or made up in drama sessions with the storyteller will be taken as the basis for a month long collective 2nd Spiral Animation exercise involving a group of fifty child from any given day. Different animators will supervise children in the construction of masks, props, costumes and musical instruments to be used in a drama at the end of the period. This gives the group (which come once a week) only four days to make all the props and put on the show. The various teams of fabricators, actors, musicians and stagehands are composed of children who choose how they wish to participate. The process of creation randomly mixes Tamil with Muslim, boy with girl, in a team effort concentrated to produce and perform a competent, enjoyable and, often hilarious, piece of theater. Just as objects are fashioned in this modular cross-collaborative manner, so also are songs, musical compositions, and dance choreographies. But this exercise with fifty children is really only a rehearsal for a much more ambitious piece of collaborative work.*

*At the end of every 9 month incubation trimester, the 3 groups of 50 children, representing at least six villages, come together to produce a matriculation piece of theater, an environmental opera on a grand scale. The families of the children, their school teachers and classmates, religious, political and educational dignitaries from the district are all invited to attend. The one performance given usually last for one hour and is presented as a processional piece using the whole garden as a stage. Admission is free. It is intended as an offering, a collective prayer for peace given by the Butterfly Garden children and animators to the people of Batticaloa, and ultimately to all the people of Sri Lanka and the world.*

There is an extraordinary amount of imagination and hard work that goes into these performances and well as an equivalent amount of satisfaction and pride of accomplishment derived from them.

These large scale collaborations involving all the garden arts and requiring the full concentration and co-operation of the animation staff, perhaps more than any other vehicle, deepen and extend the peace making mission of the Butterfly Garden in Batticaloa. Its goals of trauma healing and reconciliation are realized by deeper penetration into the community both vertically - strengthening bonds among staff and children; and horizontally - proclaiming throughout the countryside the message of peace and reconciliation.

Third Spiral Animation is that which extends beyond the walls of the central Butterfly Garden site, bringing the Butterfly Garden's theatre and creative play into the villages to reach the wider community. It constitutes many of the activities that work towards the program's second long-term objective: "At the level of the community, we seek to promote reconciliation and nurture the seeds of peace." While at the time of writing this remains formative and exploratory, there has been progress in scoping out the early stages of the strategy and defining the key components of Third Spiral animation. (see Section VI)

With the 3rd Spiral of Animation the creative genius of the Butterfly Garden awakens its sleeping counterpart in the villages and throughout the country. We are only beginning with our work in this area with plans to open two (out of 20) village gardens at Kangainodai and Ariyampati in the spring of 2000. The plan is threefold: (i) Village Gardens, (ii) Traveling Theater, (iii) The Butterfly Garden Atelier.

In Sri Lankan culture, the child is not whole unless his family and village are taken fully into account. The Butterfly Garden's Mission Statement with regard to its program of Village Gardens reads as follows: "We seek to integrate, inculturate and indigenate the creative process (poesia) of the Butterfly Peace Garden with local children of all communities in order to encourage the development and cultivation of a culture of peace, non-violence and tolerance in Batticaloa and throughout Sri Lanka in coming generations."

The 3rd Spiral of Animation begins with the Village Garden. Land is granted by the village for use as a small garden where children who have attended the Butterfly Garden can continue their creative explorations. The land is prepared and fenced in with cadjan by volunteers from the children's families. A gate and activity cabanas are erected. There is a ceremonial opening attended by parents, teachers and village religious and political elders. Then the programs begin with children guided by animators from the village who have been trained at the Butterfly Garden. New children from year six at the local school are also accepted into the play programs of the Village Garden which generally happen after school hours and on weekends. The 3rd Spiral of Animation combines aspects of both 1st and 2nd Spirals. It has an inter-generational element however which make it different and, unlike the Butterfly Garden, the groups in each village are ethnically homogenous.

A theme is followed, something common to all, like bread, chutney, wind, water, fish, garbage, transportation, etc. Parents and elders from the village are brought in to teach what they know about the chosen theme. For example, if the theme is water, they will teach songs about water, tell stories about water, describes traditions and rituals in the village that honor the place of water in daily life. Together animators, elders and children will work on art projects, music, songs, stories and a piece of theater incorporating the theme of water. On a special day all the people of the village will be invited to enjoy a performance of the "water" play.

Meanwhile in the next village, a village representing a different ethnic group, a similar process will have been followed. The children from these two villages by this time have a nine month history of playing together from the experiences shared at the Butterfly Garden. They know each other very well and often they have formed friendships. Now they have both prepared plays about water and what it means to them, each using the elders of their villages as informants and instructors. On a very special day, the Day of the Dove, the children from the Muslim Village travel to the Tamil village to present their play, and, on another such day the Tamil children reciprocate. Food is shared. Games are played. The Butterfly Garden Traveling Theater comes to town. It is a day of great celebration. Four pure white peace doves - representing the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist faiths - are released before the guests return home. It is believed that wherever these doves come to rest, peace will soon follow. These occasions happen four times a year, twice in each village.

The Village Garden programs use the Butterfly Garden itself as a resource with children coming back to renew their associations and participate in new intensive programs for short 2 or 3 month periods. In this way the original groups of Butterfly Garden children renew their creative instincts and enhance their own teaching repertoires. This is vital since they are the chief helpers to the village animators and in time they will run the village programs themselves.

Two other aspects of the 3rd Spiral of Animation are The Traveling Theater and the Atelier. Each year two plays are prepared with animators and children of the Butterfly Garden performing as actors, dancers, singers, and musicians. The plays chosen will be original comedic material from the garden advocating themes along the lines of peace, reconciliation, good health and environmental consciousness. There will be seasons each year when the Butterfly Garden Bus becomes a mobile theater, meandering along the highways and byways, performing in the villages and settlements which are the homes of the children who

have come to the garden. This theater, in combination with the atelier which is scheduled to be built in 2002, are seen as means for the Butterfly Garden to grow along side its children as they mature through the adolescent years. Whereas the Traveling Theater will respond to the needs of boys and girls with interests in the performing arts, the Atelier will concentrate on print-making, painting, photography, video and the other visual arts.

This describes the animation at the community level is it was idealized in the strategic plan. In the learning and developments in the past two years the plan for 3rd Spiral Animation has been re-framed. This is discussed in Section VI.

#### IV.3 Art and Healing

Throughout the ages and cultures of mankind, societies have recognized the power of art and the artistic process to move us and deepen our experience of life. The process of perceiving, expressing and transforming one's 'inner world' through art in its diversity of forms has been long valued as a means of self exploration. Art itself has a place among the 'healing arts', alongside various schools and traditions of religion, psychotherapy, medicine and culturally based rites and rituals. In recent decades art therapy plays an important role in emerging modes of psychotherapy.

Engaging in artistic expression can be an effective way to focus the mind and work with psychological material. Combined with opportunities for play in a supportive environment, it can be well suited for children. For children in Batticaloa district, it is a particularly empowering experience given contracted circumstances they face from poverty and life in a war zone. By contrast, the conventional biomedical approach to 'trauma healing', such as psychotherapy may be adversely stigmatizing and is not culturally acceptable. Other strengths to an art-based approach to psychological healing include its non-threatening nature vis-à-vis the different religious faiths among the children, and the dearth of creative opportunities offered available within the government educational system.

*When an artist approaches creation, there is emptiness: empty space, empty canvas, empty artist. By holding her regard open in the uncertainty of this void and by allowing herself to be moved by what manifests there, emptiness resolves temporarily into form. Form communicates in images, symbols and visual metaphors. When we empty ourselves and humbly bear witness to the prevailing chaos of destruction (and creation) our genius arises spontaneously: the genius of healing, the genius of creativity. In the process of seeking visions, songs, stories and paintings without knowing where they will come from or what they will be, we gain a sense of how this healing can arise out of chaos and uncertainty. It comes the same way a painting comes - by offering ourselves totally, undistracted and undivided, to the task. By giving our "all for nought, or not at all". (Chong)*

*Although a space can be prepared and attendants primed for supporting imaginative encounters with the unknown, true play cannot be premeditated. "To premeditate is to try to make something before it is made. Truly original expressions can never be planned in advance." (McNiff) In every moment there is the movement of creative inspiration, and within every such movement there is a moment of revelation. What makes play so serious is the kind of attention and devotion required to be fully present for that moment when the original mind displays itself, for this momentary epiphany usually arrives unexpectedly amidst chaos and confusion. What makes it so delightful is the insight that occurs, the freedom it grants, the trust it inspires in life.*

*Children are generally more at home with chaos than adults. They are better players. Since so much value is given to the therapeutic quality of play in the Butterfly Garden, children are the natural leaders. It is their energy that determines programming. The animators follow them in order to learn from them how to live more creatively with chaos and get the most out of it. Moreover, the architecture of the garden, the rituals, the theater, songs and stories, the communal meals, all arrive via child-driven logic.*

*This is not to diminish the importance of an adult presence in the garden. There is a therapeutic symbiosis between child and adult in compassionately accompanying one another through the war zone trauma. Whereas the children, their exposures to extreme violence notwithstanding, bear within themselves the full possession of their innocence and beauty, the animators carry their hard-won experience of survival through 17 years of brutality and bloodshed.*

Doctors refer to their "craft" as a practice. Likewise, in the garden we work toward "healing" or "peacemaking" as a practice. It is not just a word or a concept. It is lived reality of which we are mindful and aware.

**Practice:** *Because it is not literal, or technical, because it is paradoxical and perverse, because it does not necessarily meet our expectations and resists explanation, because it raises doubt and fear and other unpleasant emotions, because it is unpredictable and largely out of our control, because it upsets conventional expectations and is not a commodity that can easily be bought and sold, the engagement with poesis is universally regarded with suspicion and mistrust. There is a big gap in our schools where education of the imagination is concerned. It is considered an exotic and predominantly, chaotic force, a dangerous power which threatens routine lives and sanity. Because it requires sustained encounters with uncertainty, most of us avoid it and leave the world of the creative spirit to an anointed group of specialists whom we designate as "artists". It is supposed to be their function to carry the creative energy for all of us. Sometimes, however, we have no choice but access and actualize our own creative spirit, or perish. There are times no one*

can do it for us. For our species, the terminator species, some would argue that time has now arrived. As the rigid ways of conditioned perception and blind reaction to fate leave us fixated in ever more destructive cycles of violence and addiction we are forced to embrace the unknown. In a time of decline, play and the practice and cultivation of the arts should hold a place of honor. By slowing down and stopping in order to bring focus into our lives, by looking again and giving respect (L. re-spectare - to look again) to the rejuvenating function of the creative spirit, space opens up within the individual and the community, providing a channel through which healing and creative intelligence can flow. "This process has an intelligence that can be trusted, and the gift of creation is the ability to work with it." <sup>13</sup>

*We must commit ourselves to the practice of this poesia. It is somehow something that goes against our grain because it throws us into chaos. Time and again we have to face ourselves and humbly accept our predicament. This is beginner's mind, the child's mind. It is the mind of wonder and discovery. By emptying ourselves, opening, improvising, letting go, making mistakes, beginning again, a new world arises from the ashes of our delusions*

*We must diligently practice this art, giving ourselves time and space to find answers to our questions that are not merely intellectual or philosophical, but real and workable. By staying in communion with ourselves and others throughout this process in a safe and supportive environment with respectful regard for each other's expression, the process of creation will ultimately lead to a stable and meaningful outcome. However, even this outcome will eventually dissolve into chaos again. There is no end in sight to the creative unfolding of the universe.*

#### **IV.4 Ritual and Religion**

How creative play can be an approach to healing has been described as "the indigenation of ritual through play". Through play, rituals meaningful to the children arise as self-made culture, the games bearing the marks of the children's Hindu, Muslim or Christian traditions, but there is an openness, an aspect of childhood innocence, that allows us through image to open up, creating rituals that are appropriate. The word 'ritual' is derived from 'ritas' or flow, like a river, and the way the children flow with their play and how that connects them with the sacred is natural. Children have a natural sense of ritual and that will be cross-cultural. Religion might be seen as an adult form of play with symbols.

*Rituals of violence involve destruction, dismemberment, desecralization of person and place. The stories of the children who come to the garden indicate their absolute insignificance and disposability in the eyes of those who conduct the war or who are peripherally caught up in its malevolent energy. The children are trashed, the earth is trashed, the holiness of creation and all its works denied and desecrated. Use of rituals in the Butterfly Garden draws a circle around a space and say: enough! "Here. We will begin here. This ground is holy and all those who come and go from its precincts will be protected, blessed and allowed to make themselves whole again." These are everyday rituals based on harmlessness, enhancement of beauty, service and care. The culture of violence permeating the child's life in Batticaloa is replaced, at least within the walls of the Butterfly Garden, with one of gentleness and value. Each of the children, each duck and donkey, each flower, each petal falling through the air - all are holy.*

Father Paul's role as director of the Butterfly Garden and his personal attention to children (e.g. as Cuckoo Daddy guiding an Amma Appa Game session) requires sensitive respect for all religious faiths. This is particularly true, given the local history where religious differences have been used to stir up divisions and tensions between ethnic groups in particular between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. He is constantly vigilant to separate his parish work as a Jesuit priest to his work in the Butterfly Garden, where he does not wear his clerical robe and resolutely ensures that the faith traditions of all children coming to the garden are respected and treated inclusively. He recalls fondly his childhood in a Hindu village when local festivals drew together people of all religions in a communal way. "I have vivid memories of a festive performance held in early April that village people called Makudi, an earthy Hindu ritual around a primitive underground world with three different entrances, with mythological figures dressed in muddy costumes enacting a power struggle to drive out evil spirits. The community experiences a wholesome healing derived from the natural elements." He strongly advocates the Garden's search for innovative approaches to mental rehabilitation and healing appropriate to and arising from the creative energy inherent in all children. This serves as the principal vehicle for forming relationship, transformative healing and community reconciliation- an alternative approach, but not in competition with the traditional religious ways.

For example, when a child mourns the loss of a close family member, such as may arise in the course of the Amma Appa Game, he asks the child about how, in the rituals of her own tradition, the death rites are observed. The child describes what was done, and he asks her to think of that ritual and feel that what they may do together is of a similar nature. "I really wish to avoid upsetting the child by doing something inappropriate as a ritual. So it's always evolving from their own religious or ritual traditions.

"It is easy to develop a ritual when the child is open to different movements of the spirit, but on the other hand, the child is traditionally imbedded into a particular religious discipline, so the things we suggest can really upset, not the child, but the adults, and that would have bad repercussions on the Butterfly garden. For example, before the activities there is a moment of silence, asking for peace, asking that God grant us peace; that has become some kind of ritual, that we have called 'thyanum', the Tamil word for 'meditation', but a word with Hindu,



Buddhist and Christian connotations, so some Muslims may get upset. They are not very clear on what we are saying and make presumptions, about what is taking place in the Cuckoo's Garden. In future we should call it 'a moment of silence', in order to concentrate, and be in touch with your own breathing and on the activities that we are going to do. It's the name given to it, not what we actually do, that is the concern; to use the terms 'anapanasati' (mindfulness of breath), that's a Buddhist term and would raise similar concerns. With giving it another name, concerns of the adults would be decreased."

*One can be born and raised in any religious tradition and offer prayer. One can also be an atheist and pray without belief, offering his life in a compassionate way. The very secularity of the Butterfly Garden space protects and upholds the sacred, inviolable wholeness of the person, of all people. It invites the Muslim to be a better Muslim, the Hindu to be a better Hindu, the Christian to be a better Christian, the Buddhist to be a better Buddhist, and the atheist to be a better atheist. Its consecration to oneness, diversity and harmony, precludes the exclusion of any person, whatever they may believe or not believe, from the circle of life. Perhaps this is kind of model the Dalai Lama had in mind when he spoke about the need for a new concept of lay spirituality in the world.*

***"I deeply believe that we must find, all of us together, a new spirituality. This concept ought to be elaborated along side the religions in such a way that all people of good will could adhere to it, even if they have no religion or are against religion. We need a new concept, a lay spirituality which could lead us to what we are all looking for, a secular morality. I believe in it deeply." (H.H. Dalai Lama)***

*Gandhi's gospel of satyagraha, the force of truth, places action above words. "Action is my domain", he said. "It is not what I say but what I do that matters." In this regard there are many actions taken in the garden which become prayers for peace, prayers done as deeds which transcend credal categories and transform the heart. We unconditionally offer each other acceptance, tolerance and support. We encourage one another to take risks that extend our capacity to love. We oppose those prejudices that diminish the personhood of another. We honor each other's sacred truths and beliefs, even if they oppose our own. We face life's unexpected turns with courage and we help each other in times of need. We attempt to get the best out of the worst situations, using our lives happily to benefit others. We accept people's faults and failures and we do not speak ill of them, nor of ourselves. We do not exalt ourselves by blaming others. We offer our undistracted presence to one another listening deeply, with all our senses. We relinquish the delusion that we are the center of the universe. Whether visited by praise or blame, gain or loss, happiness or sorrow, honor or dishonor, we are not shaken. We remain steady and committed to following beauty's way, cultivating the garden path in all its diversity. These offerings, these poojas and prayers, this zikr, all occur within a field of play, but this does not make them any less sacred or healing.*

*Perhaps rituals now have to be invented that say this in ways specific for Batticaloa, for the Butterfly Garden, for the children from different communities and religious traditions who come there to heal. Within the Cuckoo's World, tentative efforts have been made in this direction with Cuckoo Daddy and some of the animators collaborating with children to find ritual forms that heal old wounds, new wounds, wounds before they happen. The Amma Appa Journey and its closing blessing ritual are an exploratory example.*

*Personal acts of surrender (de-creation) and self-emptying engender the ritual space of the garden with healing power. The poesis of the garden is itself is a gift and the participants' offering of the fruits of this poesis back to creation for the benefit of others brings harmony. Less a matter of stopping the war or even controlling its chaos, the rituals of the Butterfly Garden aim at maintaining a healthy state of balance within ourselves while it prevails. Paradoxically, the opportunity presented here depends upon the same ability to resonate with ambiguity that child's play and the creation of art requires.*

#### **IV.5 Relationship and a culture of caring**

*Meeting in the Butterfly Garden, child and animator join hands to journey together through a strange bi-polar landscape: there is the garden itself where they meet to play one day a week for nine months, and there is the wasteland of war in which the remainder of their time is spent. A relationship of conspiracy (L. conspirare, to breath together) develops between them in this seemingly schizophrenic milieu. The blue sky of peace is glimpsed more often behind the thundering storm clouds of war and a new view of life grounded in the garden experience of friendship and co-operation arises to replace the numbness, alienation, disgust and self-hatred engendered by a world of oppression with no hope of relief.*

*This transfusion of love between animator and child is reciprocal. The innocence and angelic trustfulness of the child - who continues to believe "in the teeth of all experience of crimes committed, suffered, and witnessed, that good and not evil will be done" - summons the compassion and creativity of the adult animator. Likewise, the maturity, resourcefulness and kindness of the animator inspires the children with the confidence and courage needed to take risks and grow. The intimacy of the bond between them carries a charge of universal potency, for by being able to love amidst such affliction, the suffering of those who come into the Butterfly Garden to heal becomes transformative. It becomes a "force of de-fragmentation in the world." <sup>14</sup>*

*Establishing relationship and sustained presence with the child is a vital element that underlies much of the healing potential of the Butterfly Garden, as it is elaborated through fostering the child's powers of transformative creative expression, the use of rituals, or modelling alternative forms of non-violent behaviour and conflict resolution.*

*"In the realm of the human, what happens after the transition to chaos depends less upon the conditions that led to it than on the response of those it involves. Unless those swept up in its power are able to resonate with it, their future is dark indeed. Entropic chaos reigns. Once they begin to participate in the chaos, however, they become a critical factor in its evolution."<sup>15</sup> Steadfastness in relationship between child and animator in chaos, over time, provides tangible evidence of the basic reliability of creation and the creative process, in spite of its contradictory dynamics. In order for an enduring continuum of presence to be possible the sanctum of the Butterfly Garden must remain open to the children throughout the period of their adolescent development and its programs diversified to meet their changing interests.*

#### **IV.6. Peace-building and Community Reconciliation**

'Peace, though it may be a deeply held wish for most citizens of Batticaloa, nevertheless remains elusive. After more than 17 years of violence, perpetrated by armed forces, militants and rival splinter groups and periods of communal violence, the climate of distrust and oppression continues. There is a collective resignation, powerlessness, and a cynicism about the prospects of peace. In earlier times, public outcries for peace may have been more common, but the outspoken all too often were targets of violence and betrayal. The average person has witnessed or experienced multiple events of intentional violence, both indiscriminate and targeted, and, as a consequence, thinks of little beyond survival and maintaining a low profile. There is therefore a reluctance to associate with 'peace-building', especially if the effort is perceived to be naïve and insensitive to the local realities, as may be the case with externally driven and funded initiatives. The earlier Health Reach program articulated the model of "Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives" whereby working toward peace is best undertaken through pragmatic efforts to improve the health and well-being of children; peace-building at a community level becomes a secondary, more tentative goal<sup>16</sup>.

The Butterfly Garden's approach to peacebuilding and community reconciliation begins at the very practical level of bringing together children from the different localities and ethnic communities, in order to learn about each other in the course sharing play, stories and theatre. Many overcome their prejudicial attitudes acquired from past negative experiences, or more typically, mimicking those of the adults around them.

The children's artistic skills and their creative accomplishments- crafts, paintings, songs, stories and dramas, capture the attention and curiosity of their parents, and teachers and classmates, widening the field of influence of the Butterfly Garden. Presentations at the schools, meetings with community leaders and now a regularly published newsletter for schoolchildren extend the message that devoting attention to the well-being of children and making incremental steps towards the restoration of peaceful ethnic relations is possible and holds enriching and inspirational benefits for the larger community. Upcoming phases of Third Spiral Animation that involve festive street theatre, exchanges between villages and the Artists Atelier for children with distinctive artistic skills will uphold the Butterfly Garden's message of cultivating peace in Batticaloa through the lives and spirit of its children. Yet peace and its realization seem but a chimera.

**Peace:** *Looking into the lives of the children who come into the garden we see that on a daily basis many witness violence, and most experience it personally directed toward them at one time or another in their young lives. Their villages are often the scenes of terror, kidnappings, killings and other forms of oppression. The trauma that they experience is not a thing of the past. They are suffering not from post-traumatic stress but from chronic, on-going upheaval in their daily lives. Casting a broader gaze, when we look at the country in which these children live we see the conflict here is not simply between the government and the LTTE. There seem to be many wars in Sri Lanka, not just one. The opposing forces delineate themselves along political, ethnic and religious lines. Within each group there are further sub-divisions with political agendas driven by well-exercised and widely proclaimed resentments, bigotry and hatred. This kind of scenario is not limited to Sri Lanka.*

*There are layers of violence throughout the world bewildering in their hold on the human heart: communal violence, neighborhood violence, street violence, domestic violence, media violence, the self-inflicted violence of substance abuse and other forms of addiction. Of the more than 180 countries in the United Nations General Assembly, how many have enjoyed peace during the last century? How many have not experienced war or civil unrest? It may even be argued that war is normal. "The universe, earth, life, and consciousness are all violent processes. The basic terms in cosmology, geology, biology, and anthropology all carry a heavy charge of tension and violence. Neither the universe as a whole nor any part of the universe is especially peaceful. As Heraclitus noted, Conflict is the father of all things." (Thomas Berry) Given this context and history then, is the whole notion of reconciliation and peace-making not a fiction, a mere utopian delusion, an abstraction, which in itself, constitutes yet another form of violence?*

*If conflict is the father, perhaps play is the mother of all things. Within play, and creativity in general, there is always a disequilibrium, a tension of forces. In surrendering to this tension and abiding with it, openings occur, insight arises, the creative intelligence - the dream - of the earth manifests itself. The labor of birthing a new, peaceful and just world will never be free of pain and conflict. Moment by moment, gesture by gesture, breath by breath, the world is born. We must attune ourselves to the way "splendor... finds expression amid the sequence of catastrophic events, a splendor that sets the context for the emerging human age."<sup>17</sup> One way of entering the understanding of the splendor of creation is to do what Socrates, on his death bed, recommended to Crito: "practice and cultivate the arts". Another way is to follow the example of children and play. Either way, we swallow the apocalypse whole and thus open space for the miracle of peace to arise.*

## SECTION - V

### The Butterfly Garden's Approach to Healing

The model for the Butterfly Garden in Sri Lanka was the Spiral Garden in Toronto, Canada which provides creative play opportunities for children with physical disabilities alongside able-bodied children from the community. However, it is not oriented to the level of psychological stressors and deprivations the children of Batticaloa have typically experienced e.g. loss of family members through violence, involuntary separation and displacement, neglect and physical abuse, poverty and other effects of war (Section VII). It was a priority to develop ways to responding to the psychological needs of individual children, an approach to trauma healing appropriate to the setting, i.e., a program for schoolchildren with differing ethnic and religious backgrounds.

It was during the first two program cycles of the Butterfly Garden that the idea of the research project developed. This one year project was proposed to help develop the Butterfly Garden's dual objectives of trauma-healing at the child level and peace-building at the level of the community. The research was to be a formative process consistent with the Butterfly Garden's philosophy, working towards a means by which the program's impact could be evaluated, recognizing that this properly requires a much longer term process e.g., following the children through adolescence to young adulthood.

The research project provided additional resources focussing specifically on designing, piloting and assessing a 'trauma-healing' activity stream for the Butterfly Garden, and activities supporting community outreach. It was conducted during the third program cycle, April 1998 to May 1999.

#### V.1. Research Project Objectives and Activities

The main objective of the research project was to develop a set of activities for individual children with psychological distress. These 'trauma-healing' activities should be harmonious with the philosophy and practice of the Butterfly Garden. The activities would be piloted and offered to a selection 20 children with demonstrable emotional and behavioural problems. Community interviewers would make home visits and gather reports from their teachers on the children.

The project commenced in March 1998 with three weeks field trip by the researcher. The basic elements of the trauma healing activities were designed, consisting of a 'genogram game' (constructing the child's kinship diagram) in a session with the counsellor (Fr. Paul Satkunanayagam), followed by sessions with an animator for expressive art activities. A second genogram session at the end of the child's attendance in the Butterfly Garden would allow for a re-assessment. Mr. Anthony Pillai Tony, a university student with an interest in counselling was engaged as an interim research assistant. Workshops with staff reviewed the Butterfly Garden play program and the children's response to it. Animators shared their perceptions and concerns about the distress in the children, and their lack of skills and confidence to respond appropriately. A series of training workshops addressing this need for capacity building was launched with seminars given by John Van Eenwyk PhD, Jungian psychoanalyst. In the last days of the field visit, Ms. Chandreka (Rekka) was hired as the full-time research assistant. Mr. Tony (until he left in June 1998) and Rekka worked with Father Paul, Paul Hogan and some of the animators to help pilot test and revise the genogram game protocol. The genogram session was named the Amma Appa Game (the Mother Father Game) and refined to an appropriately ritualized format to engage the child, facilitate disclosure of life experience and feelings, affirm the child's inner resources and potential for healing. As well, materials for schoolteachers were assembled and translated into Tamil to assist them in selecting appropriate children to refer to the Butterfly Garden.

In November 1998 the second research field trip finalized the Amma Appa Game protocol and approaches to the follow-up session, along with interview approaches for the home visits. Two community social workers were hired in December to make home visits and interview teachers.

The third field trip in April 1999 coincided with the end of the 3rd program cycle and its closing performance (see Section VI). Information from the genogram sessions, home visits and teacher interviews were reviewed for nine of the children. Father Paul and the animators were interviewed about the 'Cuckoo's World', the Garden's emerging activities using deeper '2nd Spiral Animation' approaches. Dr Van Eenwyk conducted a second series of psychological training seminars. Consultations were held about the Butterfly Garden's plans for community outreach involving small satellite garden sites in participating villages; this was later elaborated by workshops and interviews by Pat Lawrence PhD, anthropologist, in June 1999.

In subsequent months, the information from home and school visits and follow-up sessions were gathered on all 20 children who participated in the Amma Appa Journey (the 'trauma healing' activity stream).

The data was sent to Canada and formatted into a series of case studies (Section VII). The rest of this section describe the trauma healing program as it emerged by the end of the research project.

### V.1.1 Rationale for the Adopted Approach

The Butterfly Garden is psycho-dynamically rich, and constitutes a significant experience of social learning and creative skills development. Many elements are introduced to the children that promote healthy ego functioning over the course of nine months of regular weekly attendance. For example, the animators in their interactions with the children model non-violent behaviour and conflict resolution, the impact of which should not be underestimated, considering that in many homes and schools corporal punishment is routine.

Apart from the general program, however, a specific psychologically therapeutic activity stream was called for, to respond to the demonstrable needs of individual children exhibiting e.g. grief, aggression, depression, fear, anger and vengeance. This was necessary for several reasons:

1. Children attending the Butterfly Garden were selected by the teacher or school principal principally because of dysfunctional behavior in the classroom or known troubles in the home.
2. The animators who oversee the art and play activities did not necessarily have the counseling experience, skills and insight to identify and respond appropriately to the needs and behaviors that arose. Typically, they look after a dozen children at a time and cannot devote the extensive personal time required by a needy child.
3. Emotional and psychological troubles may frequently result in the child being stigmatized by their peer groups and adults. Consequently children are reluctant to disclose and share their feelings, unless they are assured of trust and confidentiality. This requires that the healing interventions be offered by those with appropriate skills and spatially separated from the general program activities.

### V.1.2 The Cuckoo's World

The psychological / trauma healing program developed in the secluded corner of the Garden called the **Cuckoo's Nest** away from the other activity areas [photo 39]. Its name alludes to the bird, found locally, that lays its eggs in other birds' nests (a natural example of displacement and orphan-hood) The cuckoo's characteristic hooting call is mimicked by the children in the Garden as a salute in the opening and closing sessions of the day program.

The healing program team consisted of the psychological counsellor (Fr. Paul, the Butterfly Garden program director, alias 'Cuckoo Daddy'), the research assistant (Rekka), and two animators who served as 'creative companions' in one-to-one art sessions with the children. These art sessions are conducted in the **Cuckoo's Chariot**, a small hut mounted on ox cart wheels adjoining the Cuckoo's Nest [photo 40].

In the course of developing activities in the Butterfly Garden for trauma healing, a third space was constructed above the Butterfly Bus' 'hangar' named the **Cuckoo's Cloud** [see photo 56], dedicated to psychologically sensitive sessions held with groups of children (described in Section V.5.). These three sites are collectively known as the **Cuckoo's World**, a physically grounded imaginary world of healing and self-integration in the Butterfly Garden.

Children who seek help for inner distress or exhibit demonstrable psychological troubles may be invited to participate in the **Amma-Appa Journey** ('Mother-Father Journey') involving the **Amma Appa Game** and related rituals in the Cuckoo's Nest [photos 41-44]. This is followed up with expressive art sessions with a creative companion in the Cuckoo's Chariot in subsequent weeks.

## V.2 The Amma Appa Journey

### V.2.1 Origins of the Genogram Game

The Amma-Appa Game evolved out of experimental work combining narrative interview techniques with a game-like task constructing the child's genogram, or kinship diagram with cards and using markers for different life events and conditions. The genogram has been used in adult family therapy by social workers and primary care physicians recording family health information<sup>18</sup>. To our knowledge this is an innovative use of the genogram not previously reported in the literature.

A genogram-based interview exercise was devised and pilot-tested by the researcher and Fr. Paul during the Health Reach field work in 1995. Several children who had been interviewed using the

conventional psychological and war trauma checklists were invited to construct their genograms on a white sheet with a set of coloured cards with details written in chalk of the household members and the family's history. Children responded enthusiastically to the task which gathered similar information to the questionnaires on the lives and deaths household members. The visual and tactile activity engaged the child, reducing some of the awkwardness of direct questioning on such sensitive topics. In the early years of the Butterfly Garden, Fr. Paul continued to use the same set of genogram cards with children in various ways, individually or in small groups, and with casual or more formal manners of approach.

"In using the genogram with over hundred children in this way, the counselling staff are convinced of its trauma healing qualities. Many of the children carry around with them such terrible stories and for the most part, they bear them in silence. There is no one to listen to them- their story is often suffocating them and in the genogram experience, when it is set up and concluded with the right setting and spirit, they may for the first time feel relief from their secret story. If other children are present who have undergone similar fates they find group support. The genogram is intrinsically healing.<sup>19</sup>"

### **V.2.2 The Amma Appa Game**

For the research project, the genogram session was revised to become more methodical and consistent with a semi-structured protocol and an expanded 'tool kit' of markers for exposures, roles, relationships used in the game, and a format for systematic record keeping. The Amma Appa Game and accompanying ceremonial rituals is likened to a journey with the counsellor as guide. The 'standard' version of as it had developed by the end of the research project is described below.

The objectives of the Amma Appa Game session are:

- to enable the child to tell their life story and that of their household, and to review elements of their personal, family and social environment that are risk factors for psychological troubles, or sources of resiliency from which they derive personal strength and a positive outlook.
- to promote psychological integration and healing for the child through attentive non-judgmental listening, and the use of guided imagination and healing rituals as appropriate
- to ensure confidentiality of the child's testimony and that the child's trust is not jeopardized.

The session begins at a pre-arranged time during the day's program, while other children are engaged at the various activity centres. The Guide accompanies the child from the Garden's main gathering place, walking with the child to the gate of the Cuckoo's Nest. Together they enter, removing their shoes according to custom, and sit down comfortably before the Amma Appa Game mat and accessories laid out in preparation. There is an atmosphere of cleanliness and privacy. The child's interest is heightened by the ceremonial, or ritualized elements incorporated into the protocol; these may vary according to the child's comfort and circumstances.

The child sits on a white cloth before the Amma Appa mat and accessories: cards, icons (symbolic markers), string, sea shells, and marker pens. After a moment of silence, the Guide leads her through a process of open questions and discussion topics facilitating the child to describe her family and life story. The guide assists in recording the information on the Amma Appa mat using the cards to represent people and icons for roles, relationships and life events placed accordingly on the mat.

The Amma Appa Game mat is a painted canvas rectangle (4 x 6 feet) with images corresponding to the session's sequence of enquiry around the border. The central area has in three horizontal stripes of colour representing different generations: at the bottom (blue), for the child's generation; in the middle (red), the parent's generation, and along the top (yellow) for the grandparents' generation.

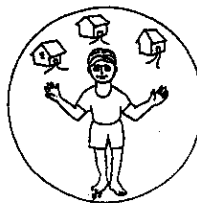
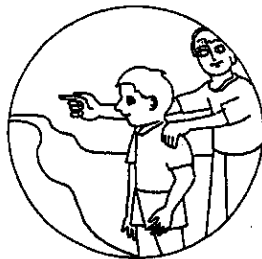
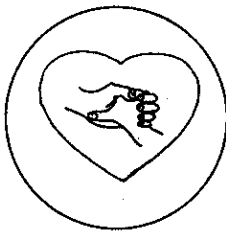
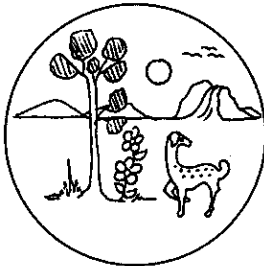
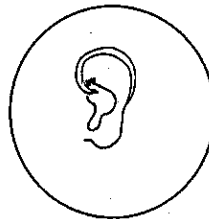
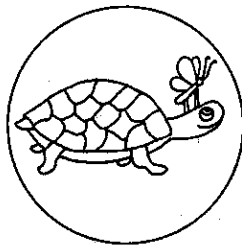
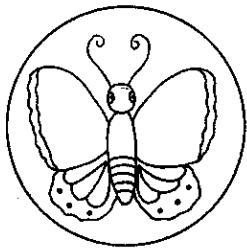
Different coloured cards (approximately 5 inches across) represent family members: green- siblings and cousins; blue- parents, aunts and uncles; and orange- grandparents, of either round (female) or square (male) shape. People outside the family are indicated in white or black (with positive and negative associations, respectively).

There are 28 Major and 24 Minor icons, round cardboard markers with images to represent roles and life events pertaining to the child's family and social world: functional relationships, causes of death or disability, sources of distress and happiness, etc. (See the figure in the following two pages).

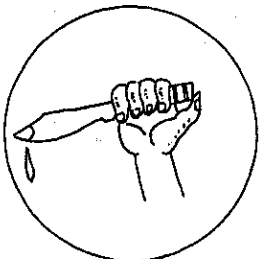
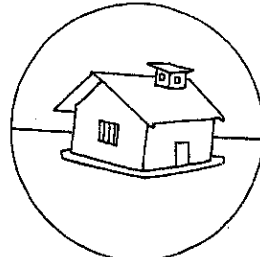
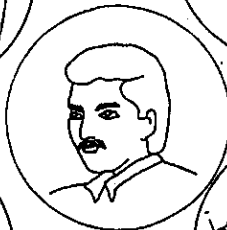
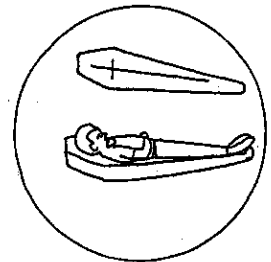
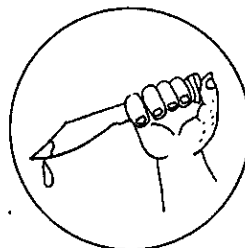
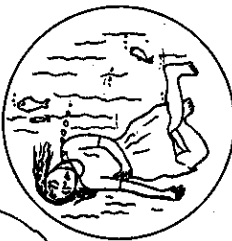
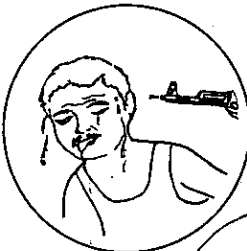
In the process of the session, the guide is responsive and sensitive to the child's emotions and varies the format accordingly. The session proceeds through the following stages of exploration:







**"ICONS OF THE AMMA APPA GAME"**



1. **Basic Family and Household Structure:** The guide assists the child to lay out the basic structure of the child's present family and household with the coloured cards. The present household is encircled with string. Ages of family members and other information can be written on the cards using chalk. Key relationships are marked with the appropriate icon as the child mentions them.
2. **Physical Risk Factors and Death- Family and Household:** Conversation turns to those in the family and household who, in the lifetime of the child, have died, moved away or are otherwise not present. **Cause of death** (natural causes, accident, suicide, killed by conflict or other sources of violence), **reasons for absence** (marriage, work, arrest/detention, personal security, disappearance), and kinds of **physical disability** in the family are noted by the icons placed appropriately. If the child's household has been displaced or their home attacked, etc., the circumstances and reasons for it and how many times it happened are explored, and noted on the mat.
3. **Emotional Risk Factors- Personal, Family and Household:** On a more psychological level, factors affecting the child emotionally are delved into, pertaining to family members and the child's relationship to them, including: physical abuse, intimidation, neglect, alcoholism and/or drug addiction, sibling rivalry, mental illness. **Key relationships**, positive and negative are identified: e.g. the child's confidant, guardian/protector, source of emotional support and comfort, etc., and recorded by the appropriate icons. In the course of the conversation, or with direct inquiry significant psychological factors are also probed: nightmares, separation anxiety and longing, suicidal thoughts, etc.
4. **Extra-familial / Community Risk Factors- Physical / Emotional:** When people outside the family are significant to the child's world or experience, these are also explored and recorded on the mat using the markers.
5. **Three Saddest / Worst Experiences:** After the child has described his/her world and represented it on the Amma Appa mat, the negative experiences that most affected the child are sensitively explored, if they have not already been done so. The objective is not so much to gain a factually accurate understanding, but to provide a psychologically intimate and safe space to best allow the child to share their inner burdens and pain.
6. **Three Happiest / Best Experiences and Natural Healing Resources of the Child.** At this point in the Amma Appa Game, the attention of the Guide becomes more directed toward revealing the positive elements and resources within and around the child- personal attributes (e.g. humour, courage, honesty), important relationships, dreams and ambitions, reflections of happy past-times and experiences, etc. Even in the most bleak of life situations, the child's innate goodness and capacity to forbear and maintain resiliency can be reinforced and encouraged. Included were questions referring to the child's experience in the Butterfly Garden such as, 'Do you like Nature?' "What is your favourite animal?" The goal is to bring to a close the Amma Appa Game end on a positive and empowering note, without denying the reality of the child's difficult circumstances.

After the Amma Appa Game is over, the Guide helps the child conduct the Blessing Ritual based on her own religious tradition in which she prays for people in her family and others she met while on the Amma Appa Journey. The blessing ritual reinforces the child's sense of his/her own goodness and ability to heal, no matter what has happened.

Typically, the child is then led to see the Cuckoo's Garden adjacent to the Cuckoo's Nest and invited to 'continue the journey' in the chariot-shaped house with one creative art sessions with one of the animators (in the role of Creative Companion). The child are then taken to the gate of the Cuckoo's Nest and bid farewell, bringing the Amma Appa Journey to a close. The session takes approximately one hour to conduct.

*Though his eternal abode is the gap, at the Butterfly Garden, the Cuckoo Daddy's main residence is called the Cuckoo's Nest. This is where he first meets the children, sometimes individually sometimes in small groups. There are many kinds of games played there but perhaps the most important of these is the Amma Appa Journey. This actually is a very profound ritual of healing which takes the child through her life from beginning to present in a kind of Tarot based on images familiar to any child who is living in a war zone. In journeying through it with the guide, the child sees her whole life unfold before her. She talks about this world with the Cuckoo, and also about her hopes, fears and dreams.*

*The garden is a story world made up of all the tales the children, the animators, the animals, birds and flowers spin. But it is when the child stops spinning, when he pauses for a moment with Cuckoo Daddy and relates a story which is not "make-believe" – his own true story, as he remembers it – and then somehow connects this story with all goodness and originality he has found in himself through following the garden path, that a moment of healing occurs. This epiphany may happen in the Cuckoo's Nest; it may happen while dancing in one of the plays; it may happen while scampering around the peace tree playing*

one-legged tag or on the Butterfly Bus going home. But it happens because, at some point, there is a convergence of myth and biography accessed and owned, however tenuously, by the child. The moment of convergence, perhaps singular, perhaps one of many, is the miracle. Nobody can say for certain, however, if it really has happened, or if it ever will. All we can do is join Cuckoo Daddy and hold the gap.

Ordinarily, children self-select for sessions in the Cuckoo's World. Different rules apply here than in the rest of the garden – mainly, you can't leave until you have completed the session, and new kids can't enter the Cuckoo's Cloud or climb aboard the Cuckoo's Chariot mid-session. However, the children have come to respond very positively to the special attention given them and to the quality of the work they produce in these sessions. There is never a shortage of volunteers to fly with the cuckoo.

### V.2.3 The Use of Ritual

The Amma Appa Journey makes use of simple rituals, adaptive to the situation and dispositions of the child to enhance the healing process. Two such rituals are the Breathing Meditation and the Blessing Ritual.

The **Breathing Meditation** is used in the Amma Appa game when, for example, the child experiences deep grief or longing about a person(s) close to their heart, or great anxiety in the course of the Amma Appa Game.

The child holds a seashell in her hand representing the person or concern for which the child wishes to pray. Feeling the shell in her hand, the tactile sensations help ground the excited emotional states, and entering into silence, focuses on her breathing to help settle. The Guide brings her attention to the sensations of breath in abdomen and chest, drawing her attention inward. Bringing the particular person(s) to mind, they feel and examine the shell held in hand representing that person. Holding her attention on that person, the guide leads her through a series of breathes, visualizing the feelings held within on the in-breath and releasing them on the out-breath, e.g.: "Breathe in and experience the love for ...; Breathe out and experience your sadness leaving you...."

Another version of the ritual using the shells is used more generally<sup>20</sup> as follows:

Picking up a shell to hold in the left hand, "Breathing in, I am a flower, breathing out I am beautiful". Hold the visualization while breathing a few times, then pass the stone to the right hand and place it down on the ground.

Picking up to hold another shell in the left hand, "Breathing in I am a mountain, and breathing out I am strong." Feeling the images blend with the breath, pass the stone to the right hand and place it on the ground.

Picking up another shell, "Breathing in I am space, breathing out I am free." ...pass the shell to the other hand and place it on the ground

Picking up another shell, "Breathing in, I am water, breathing out I reflect everything I see / or I flow to the sea...

The images- flower, mountain, space, water, are echoed and reflected upon, as are the qualities- beautiful, strong, free, flowing... And then they just sit there, experiencing the moment.

The **Blessing Ritual** brings closure to the Amma Appa Journey. The Guide leads the child away from the Amma Appa Game mat to the Cuckoo's Chariot next door, as he re-tells some of the moments and details the child brought up in the session. The child holds in her mind the images of the people she loves, worries about, grieves, and whom she wishes to bless or protect. The child prays, in her own way- silently, with words or gestures, suitable to her own tradition (Muslim, Hindu, Christian, or personal inclination). The ritual may vary considerably, depending on the nature of the feelings and experience, the child's to be present and undistracted. The Guide is creative about how he conducts this, not to impose anything, and allowing for spontaneity: "I try to make the child feel warm and giving her a sense of being blessed. For example, I think of the metta (loving-kindness) radiation in the Buddhist tradition- May all beings be happy, may they be free of suffering, may you have physical and mental health, may you take care of yourself. This is a kind of thought stream can always adjust to the situation in different ways, such as to think about Allah, or to ask for blessings from your gods."

Plans are underway to construct, a small cane hut adjacent to the Cuckoo's Nest called the **Dreaming Lodge** to which the child and the Guide retire after the Amma Appa Game to create a special sacred space for the ritual. The design and intent of the Dreaming Lodge is based on the Sweat Lodge in North American aboriginal traditions. Under the guidance of Shirley Bear, an elder and artist of the Maliseet Nation, such a Dream Lodge has been installed in the Spiral Garden in Toronto and used for similar purposes. Besides being used for closure of the Amma Appa Journey, the Dreaming Lodge can be used on other occasions without occupying the Cuckoo's Nest.

symptoms and behaviours as to the nature and severity of the psychological distress and dictated a summary assessment of the session.

#### Age Appropriateness and Emotional Literacy:

Some children did not engage as deeply as others. A child may be amused with selecting the symbols and making the arrangements, participating more superficially; this was not necessarily distracted or evasive behaviour. Many children had not reflected on life like this before, and had a poorly defined sense of self or were not ready for the kind of discernment of feelings and insights due to their age or emotional and mental development. In his work with adult ex-detainees and torture victims in counselling and seminars, the counsellor had also observed similar difficulties identifying and expressing feelings in words.

Based on his experience with the research, he has concluded that the Amma Appa Game is best suited for children twelve years of age or older. This is relatively older than the age range for which the general Butterfly Garden program may be most suited (6 to 12 years of age). It may be integrated into the Youth Experimental Program for adolescents being planned (Section VI).

#### Follow-up Amma Appa session:

The research protocol called for a follow-up session with the child some months later, many had creative art sessions with creative companions in the Cuckoo's Chariot. It was also felt that the value of the Amma Appa experience could be enhanced by extending thematic continuity for the child into the creative artwork and to a follow-up session. The follow-up session also probed the child's assessment of himself and his experience at the Butterfly Garden. Guidelines sessions included additional questions such as:

Reviewing the child's recollection of the first Amma Appa session and the best and worst experiences to re-assess associated level of distress

Assessing Changes since at Butterfly Garden:

Personal changes; sense of self; learning about self? sense of others (in Garden and outside)?: better or worse? In what way?;

Life problems and their influence on the child? What has brought about any changes?

Attitudinal changes: towards future; other children; ethnic groups

Resiliency; describe those features seen as strengths or important qualities: courage, humour, agreeableness, inventiveness,

Thinking back to when you first came to the Butterfly Garden, are there changes in your feelings about: school?

Home life? Time with friends? ; Your self? (ranging from much worse to much better)

What do you like best about coming to the Garden?

If you feel you have problems in your life, do you feel you have been helped by coming to the Butterfly Garden?

What has been most helpful?

In many cases, the second genogram session evoked more profound and insightful material; the child's attitudes were more apparent. Additional background information was available from the animators and home visits so the Guide could focus more on specific issues.

Confidentiality It was evident that children's willingness to disclose feelings and re-tell experiences depended on their sense of trust and the privacy of the circumstances. This sometimes required more than one session to establish; deeper disclosures and sharing of emotional pain were often revealed later in Cuckoo's Chariot art sessions or in the follow-up Amma Appa Game session. The animators accompanying the children in art sessions were instructed to honour the child's wish of secrecy. In the event that this might seriously limit best ways to help the child, they would inform the child of their dilemma before acting on their best judgement and disclosing the information to another person

The importance of maintaining confidentiality was a primary concern. This became clear during the research project and constrained the counsellor from sharing information from some of the sessions with the animators doing the art sessions, lest that the information become a matter of gossip among the animators and leaked to other children and beyond.. This could have grave consequences for the child and the Butterfly Garden program itself. In the year that followed the project, there was a deepened respect for these issues among the staff and greater confidence that some animators can be trained to perform the Amma Appa sessions in a professional way.

#### Animator training in accompaniment

In the course of the research project there were many discussions about animator training for deeper psychological work with children. Besides issues of confidentiality, there are concerns about the maturity and skills necessary to e.g. identify psychological transference and counter transference. Because of the 'idyllic' setting of the Garden, and the child's vulnerabilities, the potential for forces of attraction must be recognized

and professional respect for ego boundaries observed. Fr Paul's greatest fear is that the Garden's animation work be perceived as mere play and fun conducted at a superficial level without seeing more subtly the opportunities that can open for psychological healing and peacemaking.

The Garden's animators were scouted out and selected for their natural talents with children and in the arts. Most do not have post secondary training or backgrounds in child development or psychology. It is unlikely that trained professionals would be interested in working in the garden unless they originally came from Batticaloa, or are suited to the experimental nature of such work. Certainly the animators' knowledge and skills have deepened in their 2-3 years of work, and through the training seminars with visiting professionals several times a year. Nevertheless, many important concepts are still beyond some of them and greater attention has to be given to training. At the time of writing, the team of five animators, who have done most of the accompaniment work with children (2nd Spiral animation), will be initiated into using the Amma Appa Game, and more structured teaching sessions using case studies and 'problem-based' learning will be scheduled.

#### The Amma Appa Game is no panacea

As much as the Amma Appa Game provided useful means to help children talk about and gain insight about their lives, it is only a starting point. Learning that a girl child constantly dreams of her dead mother, or that a boy is tied up and beaten by his father, the Game and its symbols cannot tell all the story. The purpose was to share the moment with the child, and reassure or guide the child towards healing ways to continue to process the emotional content, as for example, in the art sessions that follow. It is important that the icons and symbols of the game not be interpreted in a facile way and confused with the emotional pain the child carries within. "the symbol of a lady working and a plane flying overhead- representing the suffering of a child whose mother goes to the Middle East- this is not enough- the child is going through more emotional pain- that part of the situation has been left out of the picture and that is where healing has to take place"

While the Amma Appa game may be a focal point for working with a distressed or traumatized child in the Butterfly Garden, it is important not to attribute to the sessions of the Cuckoo's World itself all the positive changes that may occur in the child. In following up the child with home and school visits, it is clear that the socialization in the Butterfly Garden has helped the child to reach out to more people. They have better confidence as a result that leads to better functioning and abilities in school, as well as at home.

Evaluation It is important to find ways measure the child's relative happiness and the degree of change they experience. This is important for the accompaniment team as well as for funders and visitors who ask about the outcomes of the program for the children. There is ample evidence of positive changes, such as the satisfaction evident during their activities and their sense of confidence and initiative, e.g. when telling a story, or presenting before the rest of the children and staff in the closing circle. There are changes in their courage, humour and inventiveness, aspects of the child's inner resiliency; this is not necessarily demonstrated in the Amma Appa Game, but with other activities in the Butterfly Garden.

For example, a rating scale for happiness or satisfaction was been proposed based on a painting of children climbing to different heights in a Tree of Happiness:

0. (low) a child buried in the ground, e.g. with only head showing, unhappy face
1. buried to the waist, making an effort of getting a leg out
2. standing up from being bent over, looking at the tree
3. one foot on a low branch and climbing up the trunk
4. climbing higher into the tree, looking up
5. sitting on a high branch, looking satisfied
6. (high) standing at the height of the tree, arms wide open, exultant

In the Cuckoo's Nest sessions, the child could be asked which figure they identify with to describe their presence and past levels of happiness. Pilot testing on children of different ages and circumstances would determine how useful this scale may be.

Future plans At the conclusion of the research project it is hoped that the Amma Appa Game will be conducted with more children, more than the 20 per group of 150 children. It was decided that each should also have a follow-up session, to provide therapeutic continuity and as a means for ongoing evaluation.

#### **V.3 Cuckoo's Chariot- One-on-one creative art sessions.**

The art activities of the Cuckoo's Chariot were developed experimentally in the course of the research project for the children participating in the Amma Appa Journey. Two animators, (male and

female) were selected to work with children individually based on their interest and abilities to engage with children at a personal level. Animators working in this way can be called "creative companions" as they accompany the child. Children having personal difficulties or worries tended to seek out these individuals anyway; and those referred for the Amma Appa Journey were often selected by these animators.

At the conclusion of the Amma Appa Game in the Cuckoo's Nest, the child is accompanied along a connecting wooden walkway into the adjacent Cuckoo's Chariot house for a closing reflection / ritual. Located in a quiet, shady garden area behind a fence is the small hut built to a child's dimensions. It is here that further personal attention is given the child through the creative art activities. The hut has two floors so that more than one session can take place at the same time. At the beginning of the project, the Cuckoo's Chariot had not been built as a private place for sessions. When they were held elsewhere, they were often interrupted by other curious children, affecting the child's willingness to talk, express sensitive emotions or recall difficult memories. Once given a private place of its own, the sessions became more evocative and with fewer distractions. Occasionally a child asks that a friend accompany them in the first session, but this is gently discouraged.

Many children have very difficult lives and they have not had the opportunity to share their feelings with a special friend without being rejected, punished or ignored. The art session can be the place for this, which is itself clearly helpful. Over time the animators developed their skills and insight and found other ways to help in addition to empathetic listening.

### **V.3.1 Specific Activities**

The various activities in the Cuckoo's Chariot sessions engage the child's interest and curiosity and allow for some special attention by the animator. This is in contrast to the activity centres where an animator is often busy with a dozen children and cannot focus their attention on a single child who is e.g. reserved or shy. The animators develop experience and intuition about which activities may be most appropriate for the child. For example, a child who wants to talk a lot in an introductory session may benefit from activities that promote story telling. The sessions typically last one to one and a half hours; activities may take place over more than one session.

#### **1. Art Folio**

Typically the first activity for the child in the Cuckoo's Chariot, the task is to make a large envelope out of cardboard, with collage and painting on the outside by the child for safekeeping of their artwork. This gives them a sense of belonging as well as the satisfaction in making a piece of artwork. A second similar picture is made to take home. The child chooses coloured paper for the figure and background, and selects stencils of animals (rabbit, lizard, kitten, elephant), birds and flowers. The object is outlined, cut out and mounted in the centre of the paper which they paint, and the surrounding field made into a colourful collage of painted paper.

Some children are apprehensive about having someone's undivided attention. The many different activities involved- painting, tracing, cutting, gluing and making patterns, engage them thereby reducing their nervousness. They do not necessarily talk much, but may be asked about their choices of colour or animals, and they may describe associated with feelings or experiences (e.g. red = anger, the animal is named after a family member, or are associated with some inner feeling of the child).

#### **2. Name Game**

The child writes down his/her full name vertically down the left side of the drawing paper; (father's name followed by child's name). The child makes up a word beginning with each letter in free association, the first word that comes to mind. Next to the word there is space to draw a picture. The choice of words and images are often revealing, and become opportunities to share feelings and associations with the child. Frequently there are conflicted feelings. For example, children may be unhappy writing their father's name because there are troubles at home, and their first impulse to write something negative is followed by some retraction; this can be worked through in conversation with the creative companion.

#### **3. Body Painting**

The child is drawn and paints human figures. They often appear quite different and on questioning the child shares feelings and stories transferred onto the figure. The animator may help the child with the expression, such as colouring feelings around the heart area. The children are often moved and uplifted by the activity and sharing it with the animator. The sessions close with a moment of peace.

#### **4. Greeting Card**

This activity has the purpose of making something for someone important in the child's life using white cardboard that is folded and painted. Oftentimes the child requests to make something like this (see Case study #6). In the session the children talk about their relationships and the animator have a good opportunity to learn more about their situation and be supportive.

#### **5. Story TV**

This is a more elaborate activity that may take a few sessions. A sequence of pictures are drawn and coloured by the child. They are put together in a sequence, taped together, and wrapped around two wooden rods and placed inside a cardboard box like a television when the pictures are scrolled up and down.

#### **6. Claywork**

This is another activity to help the child to make stories. Figures are made from coloured clay and with this the children make stories about the figure. Emotions and experiences of the child are often projected onto the clay figures and have special significance.

### **V.3.2 Comments**

Before the Cuckoo's Chariot session, the guide can discuss the genogram session and his insights about the the child with the animator creative companion. With the closing ritual of the Amma Appa Game, the child is led to the Cuckoo's Chariot; helping to link and maintain continuity between the two components of the healing process. For issues which may be difficult to fully deal with or bring about closure in the Amma Appa Game, the guide can suggest this be taken up in sessions in the Cuckoo's Chariot.

Generally the children became very comfortable with their creative companions. For many, this is their first experience to have an older 'garden brother/sister' offering them undivided attention, and accompanying them in a focused creative activity. Their delight and satisfaction is obvious and gives a big boost to the confidence and self-esteem. This alone has been seen to inspire and motivate them in their school participation and how they contend with their peers and family. With half of the children the perceived need for sharing and talking sidelined the art activity and the animator felt it use of the session for empathetic listening. The animators are steadily developing the skills so sessions can be more evocative for the child: how to assist the child in giving voice to their feelings, how to handle difficult issues that arise, how to praise or affirm the child.

### **V.4 The Cuckoo's Cloud**

The research project focused on activities for trauma healing for individual children as distinct from the general creative play and art activities. However, because of the research, there was heightened interest to develop new animation activities for the general program as well. In October 1998, half way through the research period, a large room above the parking hanger for the Butterfly Bus was constructed and named the Cuckoo's Cloud. Here, artwork, puppetry and storymaking take place for groups of children with greater attention to the expression of feelings, working with the children's experience (i.e., 2nd Spiral Animation). The sessions were facilitated by one animator; in the fourth program cycle this was increased to three animators working together.

The Cuckoo's Cloud sessions are, like any other activity, chosen by children, but attendance is restricted to no more than 8. When too many children request it, some are given first chance to participate the following week. Unlike the other activities centres, children are to stay for the whole, uninterrupted 3-hour session. Over the course of the program cycle there is a progression in the content of the sessions. Several activities involve children paired together with someone from another village. The Cuckoo's Cloud is very popular and almost all 150 children attend the nine activities. Children with significant troubles and who would benefit from an Amma Appa Game in the Cuckoo's Nest can be identified.

#### **V.4.1 Cuckoo's Cloud Activities**

##### **1. Introductory Butterfly with a Story**

This first activity introduces new children to the Butterfly Garden. From the high vantage point of the Cuckoo's Cloud, the different places in the Garden are pointed out. Children are introduced to one another and they share the associations they have with the butterfly and its nature. Group games such as 'pillow passing', 'goat and turtle', and jumping in and out of a circle keep the children lively and playing together.

##### **2. Telescope and Scenery**

This activity is a continuation of the introductory Butterfly exercise. Children pair up and go out together to have a tour of the different places in the Garden. They come back and draw their favourite places in the Garden. Children share their likes and dislikes by presenting and writing: their favourite person, place, and colour in the Butterfly Garden. They make a 'telescope' out of coloured Bristol board and tinted plastic. New ways of painting

together and reducing jealousy and inferiority involve Muslim and Tamil partners sandwiching wet paint between on two pieces of paper. These are displayed at the closing circle.

### 3. Sharing Puppets Experience

The children learn to overcome shyness through the play activities with paper puppets they make with two opposite faces, happy and sad. They speak through the puppets about their families and recall memories to the group and in opportunities to be alone with a female animator. Children share their inner feelings and experiences through games or play activities better than by asking direct questions. They find it easy and joyful to share their happy memories, but it is difficult for them to speak about their sad events.

### 4. Mr. Journey-Man Experience

Children paint large cut-out figures as part of telling stories about a journey they took in the past. It helps children to recall their past events to others and to plan a future trip (where, how, with whom). Children identify their desires and learn to make priorities. The Muslim children often have had less chance to go outside their village. This is a good activity to develop mutual relationships between the children and with the animators.

### 5. Unforgettable Events

In this session children make a colourful wall hanging calendar with a clock face and learn about telling time. It includes some 'meditation painting' where they paint a special picture that they find inside patterns of scribbles drawn with their eyes closed. The activity is for children who are already familiar with the animators and trust them. They recall an unforgettable event (traumatic, sad or painful usually) which a child will share with one of the animators in brief private talks during the session.

### 6. Flowers of Aspiration

The children think about the occupations of men and women in their community and present to the group about their duty and service to society. Then they think about what career they would like to have and why. They make a flower of colourful multi-layered paper on a cardboard panel symbolizing their wish that they can take home.

### 7. Friendship Duck

The children are paired with a partner mixing Tamil and Muslim children. They are provided with paper and pencil and take turns interviewing the each other to prepare a little report. Children learn to listen to each other, exchanging writing and to practice patience. Animators help pairs having troubles. Then each one makes a 'friendship duck' out of cut-out body parts they glue on a painted scene and their own names and that of their friend are written out as a record of their friendship.

### 8. Magnifying Glass for Wishing Peace

The children are paired up and they talk about the people in their lives who are their friends and both make up their own lists. The animators then help the children focus on someone for whom they wish peace; often this is a family member. They draw a picture of a symbolic figure which for them embodies the wish for peace and a toy 'magnifying glass' with tinted plastic film through which they look upon the world.

### 9. Flag of Remembrance

This session comes close to the end of the program and prepares them with ways of remembering Butterfly Garden. They apply different paint colours onto their hand to make a handprint on a panel and write their name, place, date of birth. They think of an image and a message of peace for a painting. They then make a flag with their image on a coloured cloth for them to take home as a token of remembrance.

*Some critics may think that psychological trauma should be dealt in more practical, far-reaching ways. Programs have been developed and implemented, for example, where school teachers are taught to identify the markers of trauma in children and to develop fundamental counseling skills. Play therapy programs are organized for the children but they do not go deep enough because the facilitators are inadequately trained and because they often have not come to terms with their own trauma. In general, play and creative arts are not understood to be serious healing modalities. At best they are regarded as activities which distract children from the war, giving them a crumb of childhood comfort. There is no continuity over time, no deep and committed engagement with the suffering child. Sometimes but rarely, children will receive professional counseling which usually, when based exclusively in western psychological models, misses the mark. Religious rituals and devotions, Hindu, Muslim and Christian, are regularly offered for children and families affected by conflict. Many workshops have been given on how to identify and cope with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) but they are generally superficial in their treatment prescriptions and otherwise ineffective, mostly because this is not a post traumatic situation. The continuous violence is systemic, perhaps structural. The trauma is chronic.*



*The Butterfly Garden proposes that deep trauma needs deep healing. On-going trauma needs on-going therapy. It requires the unmediated presence of adults with children in poesia, long-term communication between them and accompaniment as equals over years. It cannot simply be word based. It has to be collaborative, multi-disciplinary, interactive, ecological and imaginative. Healing must be self-generated through the inspiration inherent in play and living creativity. Otherwise children will lose interest in themselves, in others, in life itself out of sheer boredom with the unrelieved hypocrisy they witness all around them in the hopelessness of unending war. The fragmentation and discontinuity of the war zone utterly disorients them in the direction their lives should take. These children need to be coached by creative artist/therapists from their own communities who have experienced the same kind of trauma, who are dealing with it on a conscious level, and who are completely dedicated to art and play as serious healing modalities for themselves as well as for their children. This kind of healing is not something that can be taught like social studies or penmanship. It is about presence, affection, imagination. It is highly personal, precise, painstaking, intimate. It takes time. Eternity, perhaps.*

*In the end healing arises for the child and because of the child. It is the child who calls the adult to "let go of the small self and become the true self" (Seung Sunim), to respond to his deepest aspirations as a human being, leaving aside those aspects of himself which are harmful or self-destructive, in order to walk with the child through the dream, through the trauma, through life, in a sacred manner. It is not the pathology, PTSD or whatever else it may be called, that requires our respectful and undivided attention. It is the child. The whole child.*

*If you look at the Cuckoo's World, or the Butterfly Garden for that matter, please do not think that this is how it should be done for war kids everywhere. This is what emerged out of the magic of the moment in Batticaloa. There is magic in every moment and in every situation.*

## SECTION VI

### Butterfly Garden's Approach to Community Outreach and Reconciliation

#### The Long Term Objectives of the Butterfly Garden are:

- At the level of the child, we seek to heal the wounds of children affected by the war.
- At the level of the community, we seek to promote reconciliation and nurture the seeds of peace.

This section outlines how the Butterfly Garden approaches its outreach into the community and works towards reconciliation and peacebuilding. The SLCDF/PWRDF research project took place during the third program cycle (April 1998- March 1999) when the Butterfly Garden was also formulating its strategic plan for outreach and community reconciliation. While the project's main thrust was to develop the psychological healing program of the Garden, several of its activities provided key information and valuable learning experience that informed the community outreach plans. Several Sri Lanka project advisors to the research project identified the need to assess the community relations and perceptions of the Butterfly Garden held by the children's parents and families.

At the outset of the project, it was assumed that the Garden would continue to respond to requests from schools throughout the district to send children to the Butterfly Garden. This was difficult to refuse on ethical grounds or to determine how best to select among growing numbers of requests given the widespread and prevalent needs. Nor had there been much practical thought given to the visionary plans for the broader, community based activities proclaimed in the mission statement: "Animators will accompany children who come into our care through their formative years by creating small local gardens in their villages where the peaceful and creative processes of The Butterfly Garden can deepen and mature."

In the initial project workshop the liabilities of spreading the Butterfly Garden's resources thinly across too many children and communities was acknowledged. A discussion was catalyzed about the need for 'quality' vs. 'quantity', and for deepening relations and a process of dialogue with communities. The decision was eventually made to establish ongoing relations with a set number of schools, approximately twenty in number, in the course of completing four program cycles involving 4-6 schools at a time (see figure 2, Section II). Important reasons for adopting this approach included the following.

1. need for sustained presence: Children who had experienced traumatic loss and separations would often re-experience fears of losing their friendships with the animators. Many expressed deep sadness or anxiety leaving the garden at day's end. This presented the animators with a dilemma, whether to give pat assurances to a clinging child, e.g. "that she could always come back to the Garden", which would not be possible if new schools were continually invited each year. While there are skillful ways to handle such emotionally difficult situations for the staff to learn, much of the personal growth and healing in the children was rooted in (re)-learning trust through friendships which requires continuity over time.

2. need for long term collaboration with schools and communities: Teachers observed positive results in children attending the program and many expressed interest to visit the Garden and in changing how they relate to children in the classroom. By restricting the number of schools the Butterfly Garden served, longer term and mutually beneficial relations could develop with the schools' staff and the communities. This is particularly true for efforts working towards community reconciliation.

3. evaluation: The research project challenged the staff to address some critical questions: e.g. Can it be shown that children have benefitted from Butterfly Garden? In what way? Are these temporary changes, or ones that will last for the rest of their lives? At a community level, have there been positive changes in inter-ethnic relations, or does the Butterfly Garden program pose as some unsettling threat? Because the program was unique and innovative, documentation and evaluation are important, not just for the sake of results-based management, but to describe to a wider community what a child-focused creative arts and play program in a war zone context looks like and what it may achieve. This clearly cannot be done in one year, but requires a longitudinal approach, following both children and communities over several years, ideally until they become young adults.

4. logistics: The daily procedure of picking up fifty children from their respective schools (two to four different ones each day) and returning them safely to their villages can be a considerable logistical challenge. Until a bus was purchased in 1998, transporting the children involved two vans filled beyond capacity. The routine is still invariably disrupted by mechanical problems and delays on the road and at military check-points., and many villages and schools are not readily accessible due to road conditions, security restrictions and distance.

## **VI. 1 Activities and Developments during the Research Project (April 1998-April 1999).**

### **Preliminary Staff Workshop (March 1998)**

The Butterfly Garden's interactions with the community and the rationale for schools selection were discussed at staff workshops of the research project (March 1998). It was decided to retain two communities one Tamil, and one Muslim participating in the second cycle, from which another cohort of children were selected for the third cycle. Four new schools were also selected to send children.

### **Relations with Schools:**

In advance of the program cycle, the director and selected animators visited the six schools to make presentations to the principals and teachers about the Butterfly Garden. New resource materials were prepared, including a slide show, brochures, and translated information on the characteristics of psychological distress in children, how it differs from adult forms and what can be done about it.

Subsequently, interviews were held with the teachers up of the twenty children participating in the Amma Appa Journey. Teachers reported their observations about their students and similarly the animators described some of their observations of the children in the Butterfly Garden program.

### **The Butterfly Bus:**

In May 1998 the Garden took delivery of the long-awaited bus with 50-person seating capacity that greatly ameliorated the transportation challenges of running the daily program. The Butterfly Bus was painted to identify the program and has become the most visible presence of the Butterfly Garden on the roads north and south of Batticaloa. On their way to and from the Garden, children are singing songs and their laughter often trigger unrepressed smiles from the civilians and soldiers along the roads. A large decal on the front door restricts the carrying of armed weapons. This has been duly respected by soldiers, who often flag down vehicles to solicit or demand rides along the highways.

### **Community Outreach Management**

By the summer 1998 a full-time office manager Mr Felix Kamalanathatheepan was hired to supervise the outreach and community relations activities, as distinct from the Garden's children's program. Animators took on roles in community outreach activities, including:

1. Greeting visitors to the Garden, maintaining a visitors log book, and leading tours;
2. Archiving and organizing materials for presentations, future exhibits and resource materials such as videos and books;
3. Home and School interviewing as part of the research project.

### **Home and School Visits**

In December 1998 interviews with the teachers and caregivers of the twenty children participating in the Amma Appa Journey and creative art sessions began and continued for three months. Two women (Muslim and Tamil) with community and social work skills were hired to work with the research team to visit homes and schools in the various communities. These proved very valuable, providing significant insight into the home lives of the children and served as a barometer of community opinion about the Butterfly Garden program.

There have been a few instances when a number of children are withdrawn from attendance. This has occurred in a few of the Muslim communities when a teacher or religious leader voices concern about children going outside their community, that the program is run by non-Muslims, or that there is shared play between boys and girls. Sometimes the criticisms are felt to be unfounded and in all cases, dialogue is sought to discuss the concerns. In such cases, the children's parents may face a dilemma between respecting such a view, and their own wishes and that of the child.

For many households facing poverty and dire needs, the lunch program and the link the Butterfly Garden made to the school were seen as very important. In some homes, the mother was deeply grateful for the interest and opportunity provided to her child by the garden. The home visit frequently was a chance for the caregiver to share her miseries and stresses with the interviewers. In these communities there are essentially no social welfare, child protection, or mental health agencies, so the home visit itself was something of a rarity. In other cases, neglect and physical abuse mark the children's home life, and the caregiver appeared indifferent to the mental well being of the child. There have been a few, more isolated, cases when such a parent has obstructed a child's attendance at the garden.

The home visits were very useful to gain insight and to corroborate aspects of the children's report of experiences and conditions at home. It was felt that home visits could be adopted as an ongoing activity of the program as warranted.

### **Closing Program Public Performance**

On April 4, 1999, to mark the matriculation of the 3rd group children from 6 different villages after spending 9 months in the Butterfly Garden, the production of the following opera took place [photos 45-50]. The audience consisted of over one hundred family members, schoolteachers, principals and invited dignitaries from the Batticaloa District Board of Education.

KOMALI KUTTHU (Clown Theatre) April 4, 1999

Act I The clowns are having their annual ball at the palace of the King of Clowns. While dancing and enjoying themselves, an unexpected visit by the King of the cockroaches brings dissension and unrest among the clown, especially when the wicked roach king throws out another unexpected guest, the beggar woman. The clowns are expelled from their palace by the roach and his crocodile henchman who bring the 1st Act to an unsettled conclusion with their energetic Hate Song.

Act II The clowns become drunken tramps wandering through desolate wastelands and their king himself becomes a refugee. He, however, is a man of virtue, and with his 3 helpers - Earthwork, Artwork, Heartwork - he follows his heart looking for a world of peace and harmony. One day he meets up with his former companions. They are now become dissolute, fractious tramps always quarreling and undermining one another. While the clown king and his former fellows talk, a heavenly sound is heard. The peace ship has docked in the harbor and all the clowns are going down to visit it. A fight breaks out among them at the close of this scene as to who will journey on the peace boat and who will not.

Act III The song of the boat people prefaces the meeting of the captain of the boat with the King of Clowns who alone is allowed to board the ship for an audience. The other clowns try to board but they are repelled by the light of a flashing mirror. The captain tells the king: "their minds are polluted and their hearts are filled with greed and anger. They have no place here." But at night the rascal clowns board the ship like rats. They are challenged by an choir of wrathful angels who hurl them into the sea where they drown and descend to the underworld.

Act IV In the underworld the clowns again meet the roach, this time appearing as his true self, the lord of the underworld. They are interrogated and tortured by the crocodiles who accompany the king of the underworld. When they are all but broken down, the crocodile captain offers them a deal they can't refuse. For a price he offers to take them back to their former life.

Act V The clowns surface at dawn in a lake near the chariot of the clown king. Cranes are dancing in salute of the rising sun. Recognizing their good fortune at escaping more punishment in the underworld and humbled by the beauty of the cranes dance, the clowns have a change of heart and decide to mend their ways. They are allowed to come on the peace boat as it is about to set sail on its eternal journey across the seven seas to justice and peace. But just as the boat is about to depart the lord of the underworld appears again in his guise as a roach. He bribes the captain of the boat and is allowed on board. In the final moments of the play, as the fish choir leads the peace boat out to sea, he sets about to sabotage the voyage by attempting to saw off the propeller of the ship.<sup>21</sup>

It was a delightful occasion, and visibly moving for the parents, some of whom had apprehension about even leaving their villages, to see the children of different backgrounds creating such together a spectacle of music, dance and theatre. The Deputy Director of the District Education Department was visibly impressed. In his closing speech, he outlined the recently adopted changes in the national education policy to reduce the emphasis on academic performance on standardized examinations, and enhance opportunities for children to develop social and personal skills. He declared that the Butterfly Garden is an important resource in Batticaloa from which teachers and schools can learn and he encouraged further collaboration.

The Butterfly Garden director was pleased with the feedback from the event. It was testimony to what has happened in the garden and how it has touched the larger community. Over a few short years, the relationship with the communities have significantly improved- Tamil children insist to their parents to come to see what is happening at the garden, parents of Muslim children phoning to say their children are enjoying the program- these are important developments and positive signs of amity and support that previously were not there.

### **VI.2 The Revised Community Outreach Plan**

The activities for community outreach according to the strategic plan are sketched out in Section IV.2 describing the 3rd Spiral of Animation. According to this, the end of the fourth program cycle would mark the beginning of the Village Garden Pilot Program. This involves granting of a plot of land by the participating village which is prepared with gate, fencing and activity centres to become a garden site where children,

Butterfly Garden alumni and new children, continue creative explorations. Following a ceremonial opening attended by parents, teachers and village religious and political elders, the activities combining those adapted from the central Butterfly Garden as well as new ones with inter-generational elements within the village. Corresponding village garden sites in adjacent communities eventually exchange performance and artistic pieces along commonly shared themes. In this way the Butterfly Garden envisioned working at more a community level to promote reconciliation and nurture the seeds of peace. While the goal remains the same, its implementation has undergone a re-framing based on the working experience and exploratory steps over the past two years.

The underlying commitment to stay in accompaniment with the children who have participated in the Butterfly Peace Garden throughout their formative years remains. This involves a two-fold initiative: (i) inviting children to return to the garden for a 2nd Spiral of Animation in the arts at a higher level; and (ii) starting activities at the village level that employ local animators with the children as instructors in a child-to-child transmission of creative peace-nurturing programs.

Over the last year discussions with school principals, teachers, parents and village elders in participating villages were canvassed to determine who would be interested in the 2nd round of immersion for alumni and in small peace gardens located in their villages. Some of the findings were:

- The local culture in the villages, in particular the Muslim tradition, does not tolerate the mixing of adolescent boys and girls.
- Many of the children themselves have moved on from the kind of activities they enjoyed when they came to the garden and seek more 'mature' engagements with the arts and with each other through the arts.
- In the case of implementing village gardens there was reluctance to commit to such programs. Land is a huge issue. It is one thing to take kids out for day programs; it is quite another to 'pitch tents' in their village commons. This can be regarded as an aggressive, invasive act.

This called for a reconsideration of the approach, not losing connection with those children who wish to remain in touch with us, and deepen our relationship with the 20 odd villages who know and, for the most part, trust the Butterfly Garden.

It became clear that there must be further deepening of the relationship with the villages at all levels - in the homes, in the schools, in various public for a - before starting any land-based programs. The villagers are, not unreasonably, unsure of the agenda. This calls for more time together and more opportunities for creative encounters, in order for the villagers to know the Butterfly Garden better and to determine which right path to take in order to deliver the best programs for these villages and their children. The animators felt it is imperative to respect the will of the villager elders. The idea of opening village gardens should come from the village itself and not be proposed by the garden.

In re-framing the Community Outreach ways to deepen the relationship with the children's communities will include inviting new kids from the same villages and applying the creative use of art and comedy to promote healing and reconciliation to extend goodwill and continue to cultivate the ground of peace:

**'With the greatest respect, honoring local cultural and religious traditions, we will move slowly and carefully to promote dialogue and reconciliation through extramural engagements of animators with the villages and their children. We will consolidate present operations around the Butterfly Peace Garden site in Batticaloa and from there make expeditions out to deliver ad hoc (and not permanent) art, theater and education programs in the villages with renewed hope of strengthening the spirit of reconciliation in the greater Batticaloa community.'**<sup>22</sup>

Three different kinds of programs will be offered.

(I) New Year Six children from the same client villages will be offered programs similar to those previously offered on three days of the week. This recognizes that the garden is best suited for younger children, who have been the most responsive to the opportunities to recognize their own originality, resilience and coping capacities. This optimizes the possibility of their later commitment to creative communication and non-violence.

(II) The children who came in with our first group four years ago are now teenagers attending many different schools. Some have concluded their formal education and are now working full-time. Many are not interested in the programs we offer. Furthermore, local custom requires the segregation of the sexes after puberty and there has been nervousness about teenage boys and girls from different communities mixing at

the Butterfly Garden. Appropriate programming should support their natural tendencies to bond in peer collectives so that the outcomes are socially rewarding. These peer-bonding tendencies arise concurrently with profound confusion about identity and role in a fractured civil environment

A new program for alumni of the garden called the **Youth Experimental Program (YEP)**, concentrates on more sophisticated art activities for adolescents who have already spent nine months with us in the garden. The YEP programs will occur one day per week and last for 3 - 4 months in a one pilot program. The YEP theater and art programs will aim not only at collective participation in the creative process but individual understanding of how the flow of creativity can be activated in any individual's life to counter the negative effect of war psychosis. Themes such as health, the environment and community reconciliation will tie the theater and art that emerges from the program into festivals in the villages called **Days of the Dove**. The festival which will draw on the wisdom of the village elders are seen as a means of encouraging communal education, solidarity and peace.

Application forms will be circulated in the villages to the alumni listing new courses to be offered in 2nd Spiral Animation at the Butterfly Garden. Those who sign up will be met by the bus at designated stops. The programs they participate in will be thematic and inter-generational. "For example, if we take the theme of 'water', we will create a festival around this subject by making up original stories, song, art and theater which focus on this theme. Children will be asked to consult their parents and elders with regard to the subject in focus, 'water'." Days of the Dove festival days will include art, theater and music on the particular theme and will be presented in the home villages.

(III) The Butterfly Garden has received numerous requests for special days of programming for children from institutions (schools, orphanages, group homes) who have not had an opportunity to spend time in the garden. The plan is to a **Mixed Program** on certain days, not as comprehensive as those we normally offer, but offering a practical way to express good-will in the larger community and promote days of encounter among groups of children from villages, school, and orphanages not in our present catchment area.

In the larger community the Butterfly Garden is often misunderstood to be a zoological park. Its role as a creative center of healing and reconciliation for children affected by violence needs to be more broadly experienced in the community. Thus we open the gates of the garden for day-long programs so that more young people can become acquainted with the poetic inspiration of the garden - peace is not a concept, it is a practice.

Two new programs previously outlined will proceed as planned:

1. The **Advocacy Circus Theater** will be a small repertoire theatre creates original comedic works exploring health, environmental and peace issues. The cast consist of permanent members who are either animators or youth from former programs who have proven themselves worthy actors and clowns. They are supported by younger children who are selected from current 1st Spiral programs. In the current pilot year the Circus Theatre will spend 2 months rehearsing and one month touring the 20 villages in our current catchment area.

2. A pilot **Residential Program** will experiment with helping other people set up their own small creative garden/arts programs in orphanages and group homes, such as an orphanage in Trincomalee with 21 boys in residence. The program will promote garden 'health days' in which all the activities that day features a selected health theme. After working with these themes all day, the children will take back to their villages, songs, stories and art works which advertise the wisdom of good health awareness and practice.

#### **Re. Accompaniment of Children Healing from War-Related Trauma**

The challenge to improve implementation of the Cuckoo's World programs will be addressed with supervisory sessions for animators to study complexities of sensitive accompaniment and skilful methods of interacting with the children in one-to-one and small-group sessions. The team of six animators that now work intimately with the psychological healing processes of the children will present case studies to the accompaniment team and the rest of the animators. Through workshops, seminars and the supervisory sessions with visiting physicians and psychologists, and sessions in creativity and therapy with artists and play therapists the animators will gain exposure to concepts, east and west, for the treatment of trauma. This can only deepen the quality of their animation.

Other developments and activities are worthy of mention.

The Butterfly Garden now produces its own quarterly '**Katadi**' newsletter in Tamil with graphics, artwork and games that is distributed to participating schools for the children.

The rich collection of artwork produced by the children and animators will be presented in an **art exhibition** of child / animator art and theatre in Kandy in the upcoming year. Visiting artists and musicians, Tamil and Sinhalese are being arranged as well..

The **Media Unit** keeps the mythography of the garden well maintained and up to date. Collection of sample art works as well as the stories from the Mud Mountain and other garden sources will be published and will help to explain the program to the schools, villages and institutions from which the children come. Media packages for outreach initiatives locally (Circus Theater, Days of the Dove) and elsewhere in the country will include video shorts, a slide show (10 min), and a selection of garden publications in Tamil, Sinhala and English. A cassette tape of Butterfly Garden songs and stories will be produced. Plans and preparations are underway for a special 5th Anniversary report to be released in conjunction with anniversary celebrations in 2001.

## Epilogue

When the children first come into the garden, those from different communities are somewhat shy of one another, perhaps a bit wary, even hostile. Though their villages are contiguous and share long histories of peaceful co-operation, the recent breakdown of trust between the adult inhabitants has resulted in incidents of profound violence which have severed good-will, distorted communications, and seriously ruptured communal relations. After months of pre-planning, when the Butterfly Garden bus finally arrives to pick the children up at a designated meeting place, the weekly journeys from village to garden begin. These, in themselves, might be considered a rite of passage from suspicion to trust for the children and, perhaps, to lasting friendship with one another.

For nine months the bus shuttles kids back and forth between village and garden. During this period of gestation, the seeds of renewed association between alienated villages are nourished among the little ones. In order for this to happen village elders have to agree to allow an opening to take place between embattled communities: for the bus to come to the village; for children to be taken away to participate in a program outside village supervision. The Butterfly Garden has won for itself the reputation of being a safe place for children from different communities to mix and get to know one another, as well as a place where the different cultural and religious sensibilities are respected.

Children bear with them to the garden their parents' prejudices as well as all the community tensions, but these seem easily suspended, if not shed, once they enter the ritual flow of daily activity in the garden. In the beginning the children from opposing sides do not mix well on the bus or at the site, but this changes with time. At the outset of each day, after climbing down from the bus, they gather together in a ragged semi-circle under the mango tree to listen to the storyteller's larger-than-life version of homegrown tales, sing songs invented by children from earlier sessions, and find out what surprises the animators have cooked up for the coming day's menu of events. The morning assembly closes with a few moments of silence and stillness made as an offering for peace in Batticaloa, in Sri Lanka and throughout the world. Then, imitating the whoop of the cuckoo, they jump up and fly off to their preferred art activity centers.

After a couple of months in the garden, barriers begin to crumble and the day eventually dawns when the children are composing songs and music of their own, creating stories together on Mud Mountain, and performing their own nonsensical theater sketches based on common experiences shared in the garden. They break bread together at noon and play non-competitive, gender-mixed games after lunch. At the end of the day, there is a closing assembly in which they display or perform the works of their day's creation. Some of the artwork they make is given back to the garden for exhibition in the Butterfly Gallery or for use as props in the theater, but for the most part, the children take their creations home – small seeds of peace scattered among the war desecrated villages where they live.

When it comes time for them to leave the garden each day, a tangible moment of sadness and separation anxiety often descends upon the site. As the final assembly closes, the cuckoos hoot and the children race each other to the bus to claim the best seats for the ride home. Then the entire team of animators gathers around the bus to say good-bye. The children reach down from wide-open windows to touch the up-stretched hands of their animator friends one last time before departing. Will this be the last time they meet? The children's eyes ask many questions. Two or three animators accompany the children home on the bus. The rest stand at the garden gate waving until the bus disappears around a distant corner.

On the road home the children press their paintings up against the glass for the passing world to see. They sing and shout as the bus barrels along down the road. When they come to military check-points the children fall silent while very business-like soldiers scrutinize the bus – a terrorist Trojan horse perhaps. With the soldiers signal the bus proceeds on its journey. The children break out in a gleeful chorus of joy: "Thank you, maman! Thank you, uncle!" They wave to the soldiers. The soldiers can't help but laugh and smile with the children as they wave the bus through the barricade. This happens every time, the same way. It is one of the many informal rituals that butterfly children have improvised themselves as they come and go from their garden dream.



## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Pat Lawrence, PhD Anthropology, Violence, Suffering, Amman: The work of oracles in Sri Lanka's Eastern War Zone, in: Violence and Subjectivity ed. Veena, Das Berkeley University of California Press, 2000
- <sup>2</sup> MacQueen G, Santa Barbara J, McCutcheon R. The Use of Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives Peace and Change 1997; 22: 175-197
- <sup>3</sup> Health Reach, The Health of Children in Conflict Zones of Sri Lanka: A study sponsored by Health Reach of McMaster University, Canada Colombo: Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Press, Sri Lanka, July 1996.
- <sup>4</sup> Chase R, Doney A, Sivayogan S, Ariyaratne V, Satkunanayagam P, Swaminathan A. Mental Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives in Sri Lankan School Children Affected by Armed Conflict Medicine, *Conflict and Survival* 15, 379-390 (1999).
- <sup>5</sup> Additional funders included: South Asia Partnership through Sri Lanka Canada Development Fund; Primates World Relief and Development Fund; and the United Church of Canada.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul Hogan, personal notes 1995.
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Hogan 1998-2002 BFG Strategic Plan for HIVOS.
- <sup>8</sup> Mother Ralphe Chong in *The Apocryphon of Mother Ralphe*, Internity Press, Toronto 1983.
- <sup>9</sup> see Blood of the Mango and Other Tales from the Butterfly Garden of Batticaloa, 1997 Published by Butterfly Garden 1A Upstair Road, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka.
- <sup>10</sup> Supported by the non-governmental organizations Quaker Peace and Service, and Diakonia.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul Hogan, Images of Butterfly Garden *Geist*, 33, 1999 pg 34-37; also in *Shambala Sun* magazine
- <sup>12</sup> James Hillman, *Uses of Power*.
- <sup>13</sup> Shaun McNiff *Trust the Process*, Shambala Press, 1998.
- <sup>14</sup> Shankar Rameswami *De-Fragmenting the Cosmos: Simone Weil's Tragic Vision and Tragic Politics* University of Chicago, March 1999.
- <sup>15</sup> John Van Eenwyk, *Archetypes and Strange Attractors* Toronto: Inner City Press, 1998.
- <sup>16</sup> MacQueen G, Santa Barbara J, McCutcheon R. The use of Health Initiatives as Peace Initiatives Peace and Change 1997; 22: 175-197.
- <sup>17</sup> Thomas Berry *The Dream of the Earth* Sierra Books.
- <sup>18</sup> McGoldrick M. *Echoes from the Past: Helping Families Mourn Their Losses*. In Walsh F and McGoldrick M, editors. Living Beyond Loss: Death in the Family. 1991 New York: WW Norton & Co.
- <sup>19</sup> personal communication, 1997.
- <sup>20</sup> The visualization is adapted from the teachings of Thich Nhat Hahn.
- <sup>21</sup> Program notes, Komali Kutthu, April 4, 1999.
- <sup>22</sup> April 2000 Work Plan submitted to HIVOS.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid*.

## SECTION VII

### Case Studies

The research period consisted of the third program cycle (April 1998- May 1999) during which approximately 150 children attended regularly, coming from six different schools from three Tamil and three Muslim communities.

#### VII.1 Description of participating local communities

**Mylampaveli:** The original place of the people living at present at Mylampaveli is Pullamalai where Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese had contact through trade. In 1987 Indian Peacekeeping Forces pitched camp at Pullamalai and there were widespread roundups and arrests with many disappearances. With the IPKF withdrawal, the Sri Lankan army pitched camp in 1990 and most inhabitants fled elsewhere. Those who had nowhere to go went to a refugee camp established at a college in Batticaloa under very difficult conditions. The camp was then relocated again. Children were traumatized by violence, deaths, and fighting amongst the camp inhabitants. There were bomb explosions and incursions into the camp by the army. In 1994 the camp was shelled. In 1996 the government allocated to the refugees plots of land in Mylampaveli. Social service organizations provided lavatories and building materials. A school was established as part of the colonization scheme. Many children are orphaned and many households are poverty stricken, living a hand to mouth life. Maternal malnutrition has resulted in child developmental problems.

**Oddupalli** is part of the Muslim community of Eravur. It is a colonization area surrounded by Tamil villages. In 1990 there were massacres of men women and children by Tamil militants following which there were rounds of reprisals with abductions and killings of Tamils. People are poor and are mostly farmers; some are traders. Many farmed tobacco but their crops were destroyed and families underwent economic hardship. Now normalcy has returned and cultivation has resumed.

**Manchanthoduwai** is a Tamil village 5 km south of Batticaloa, with Kattankudy on its south, Navatkudah to the north and the lagoon is its western boundary. It is a very old village, fully Tamil, mostly Hindu with some Christians. Some work in paddy fields in nearby areas, others are fishermen, traditional washermen and government service workers or do odd jobs. Manchanthoduwai is an impoverished village with many houses demolished or plundered during the ethnic crisis. Part of the village adjoining Kattankudy is fully barren when people fled to more secure areas. Village life remains insecure with two army camps nearby and frequent cordon and search operations. Many cannot travel even to seek medical facilities. If militants make any attacks on the army, the army retaliates and punishes the villagers. Farmers cannot buy certain fertilizers for the crops because they are prohibited from sale. Fishing time is limited and they have to dock their boats in front of the army camps.

**Kankeyanodai** is a Muslim village 9 km south of Batticaloa, bounded on the east and north by Arayampathy, on the south by Manmunai and on the west by the Batticaloa lagoon. The people of this village are involved in many occupations. Living on the shore of the lagoon, a considerable number of them go fishing throughout the year; some cultivate paddy fields, some do small business. Women of this village are involved in small handicrafts such as grass mat weaving.

It is a longstanding village, and historically on friendly terms with neighbouring Tamils, but in 1990 ethnic conflict cropped up in this village. They fled to Kattankudy town with all their possessions in wagons where they stayed with relatives or rented houses and Tamils damaged their unprotected homes. During their displacement they underwent many difficulties due to lack of occupation and income. Some were arrested and killed by the army on suspicion that they were helpful to the militant groups. Now they have returned to their village, but life is not as before. They cannot go fishing as they like, but are restricted in time and place according to army instructions. They can't go out of doors between sunset and sunrise. Relations with neighbouring Tamils are now distanced and the ethnic troubles and army problems have traumatized many children as well as adults.

**Selvanagar East** is a Tamil village about 9 km south of Batticaloa, with Muslim Palamunai village to the east and south and Selvanagar and Arayampathy on west and north. It is a new community since 1978 with a population of approximately one thousand, of Hindu or Christian faith. . Due to the ethnic troubles between Tamils and Muslims they had been displaced, and sought shelter in Arayampathy; homes and possessions were damaged or destroyed. Many were killed by army excesses. The government gave them land permits, but no houses, which they had to put up at their expense; most shelters are thatched with coconut leaves (e.g. photo 51). People are poor and lead a hand-to-mouth life. Some are mason-coolies, other fishermen and some do odd jobs. Women work as coir spinners and broom stick makers. Earning are

poor, employment is endemic, and fishermen face army restrictions. This village is often surrounded and checked by the army. There is little happiness and on the whole, life of the people is miserable.

Karbalanagar is a Muslim community 6 km south of Batticaloa, close to Selvanagar. It was established in 1981 and was badly affected by the ethnic problem with communal riots in 1985, 1988 and 1990; with most inhabitants displaced for a period of time. Almost all the houses were destroyed but later reconstructed with government assistance. Police and home guards were deployed and normalcy has been restored with army protection. The people are generally poor with low literacy levels. Occupations include fishing, trading and odd jobs.

## **VII.2 20 Case Studies**

Twenty of the 150 children attending the Butterfly Garden during the third program session (1998-1999) were selected to participate in the 'Amma Appa Journey'. The sessions took place over the course of the research period including the pilot testing and modifying the protocol. While the child's life experiences may be typical, selection was not random and is not necessarily representative of the larger group. These are reported as a series of case studies

Twenty children participated in the Amma Appa Journey and subsequent activities of the project, including one-on-one artwork sessions (Cuckoo's Chariot), home and school visits by community interviewers and follow-up Amma Appa Game sessions. In the course of these activities, the Butterfly Garden piloted and refined its approach to healing psychological distress of the children, and gained valuable knowledge about the life circumstances of the children, their households and communities. The research was a means to assess the program's impact on the children as perceived by themselves, their families and teachers.

This section presents the findings of these activities in the form brief descriptions of the participating communities and 20 case studies of the children. Case studies format consists of three parts:

- A. Reasons for referral to the Butterfly Garden by the teacher, and to the Cuckoo's Nest by the animator, and a description of the Amma Appa Game session;
- B. The child's progress during the Butterfly Garden program based on animator's reports from Cuckoo's Chariot sessions and general participation, and from home interviews with care providers and feedback from schoolteachers;
- C. The follow up Amma Appa Game session, and summary comments.

These materials were translated into English and collated into a coherent narrative. The researcher relied on the written materials and was not present for the sessions themselves. In some cases the information available was incomplete or conflicting. The names of the children have been changed and names of villages removed to preserve anonymity.

The following table summarizes the cases in terms of risk factors listed in the literature often associated with psychological distress in children. Overall, the table indicates the types of risk exposures and their prevalence in children with psychological distress attending the Butterfly Garden.



## 1. Shangar

### A

Shangar is an 11 year old Tamil boy from a resettlement community. His teacher referred him to the Butterfly Garden because he had lost his father and his mother works overseas due to family financial difficulties. His school performance was generally poor and he has been seen crying and fighting with other children. In the Garden, he often wandered alone or sat by himself watching others play. He rarely took his arts or crafts home. Then on one occasion he sought out an animator to talk about some of his difficult experiences, revealing his loneliness, and his desire mixed with fear and shame to reach out to others. He was the first one to participate in the Amma Appa Game in the Cuckoo's Nest.

Shangar's family was displaced from their border village when it was attacked by the Sinhalese community. He expressed great resentment that they killed his dear ones and drove them from place to place before coming to the resettlement community where they have put up a house with the government subsidy. He now lives with his maternal aunt and a cousin sister. His father died in a terrorist attack in 1990 when he was very small. For the past four years his mother has worked overseas as a housemaid and he came to live with his aunt. His 13 year old brother lives in an orphanage in Batticaloa. Aunt was widowed when her husband was taken and killed by the army. Her fifteen year daughter lives at home, but her other two daughters live in the girls residential home. Another aunt also lives in the resettlement community with her 3 children; she too is widowed, her husband taken by the army and killed. Three of his grandparents died of illness in their old age, but his maternal grandfather was killed by militants because he sold fish to the army. He saw grandfather's body, but at the time could not believe he was dead- this left an unforgettable impression.

The family is very poor; Shangar's mother sends some money to support them. Aunt sometimes beats him. He wishes he could live with his mother. He wears a look of worry, and expressed anxiety about his separation from his mother and fear that the terrible experiences he has gone through will happen again. He is introverted and sad. He has the tendency of giving in and lacks initiative. He has good comprehension, but is depressed and traumatized.

### B

Shangar was the first child to have one-on-one art sessions, using an animal friend stencil to make a collage on his art folio with his animator friend and Kattadi Ayah (Paul Hogan). Shangar was very quiet but attentive, demonstrating concentration and dexterity in doing the artwork. He chose a rabbit image and glued it on a moon so it became the Moon Rabbit. He enjoyed the artwork, which pleased him immensely and he generally responded well to the one-to-one session. At its conclusion he was invited to consider Shanti as his "garden brother" and Kattadi Ayah as a grandfather to which he broke out in a big smile. He was affirmed and encouraged to try other activities in the Garden to overcome his sense of isolation and inadequacy.

In the second session, he continued with making collages enthusiastically, with greater detail, adding an image of himself and a friend along with the rabbit amidst natural scenery of palms grasses, sun and clouds. At the end of the session a small puja (offering ritual) was arranged to chase away any worry, difficulty and hardship that might occur for him. He was given a musical instrument made of shells and sent on his way back to the Garden where he joined others in clay picture activities. In the following weeks his participation and interaction with children and staff progressed well.

The third session, a few months later, involved drawing and colouring a sequence of images on a roll of paper, which becomes an image reel inside a cardboard box like a television, telling a story. He drew with obvious pleasure. He drew a single dove in a tree; explaining that it was mother dove expecting her husband. He drew a man who lived in a house, the guardian of doves, a picture of a rat chasing a cat, a rose, a picture of a plate of chicken curry, and a scene of rain and high floods destroying houses. During the session his behaviour was much changed for the better, with evident happiness. The individual sessions were important for him, giving him means to express his anger and worries. In the past month his mother had returned from abroad for a visit, but was soon to depart again, bringing up his separation anxiety for which the special activities were helpful. In the next session the following week, he was more conversational than before, talking about his mother, siblings and relatives. While painting his pictures, he got great pleasure making up a story to go along with them, which he later recounted to some of his playmates and staff, as follows:.

"In Batticaloa there was a man named Bell Cover. He quarrelled with his wife, left her and went to the jungle where he lived in a house he built. He worked collecting and selling firewood. He led his life in this way, until one day when he was collecting fire wood, he saw a grey dove, brought it home and reared it. In addition, a cat was living with him. Although Bell Cover fed the cat well, she began stealing food and eating it. Seeing this bad behaviour, the dove went to the jungle, brought back a big rat. Seeing the cat, rat became angry; Cat

got frightened and ran away to a friend of Bell Cover, climbing into his lap and hiding in his sarong. Meanwhile, Bell Cover's wife came searching for him with a rose in her hand. Finding his friend, he took her to Bell Cover. Both of them forgot their troubles, came back to Batticaloa and started living peacefully, along with the cat and the dove. They made celebration with chicken curry. The guardian ghost of Bell Cover came to Batticaloa in search of him, and knocked at his door. Bell Cover's wife saw a ghost and hit it with broom stick. Angered by this, the ghost created a tempest and was going to destroy a house nearby. Seeing this Bell Cover sought to pacify the ghost and begged for his pardon on behalf of his wife and himself. The ghost was appeased and remained to live with them peacefully."

A visit was made to Shangar's home with his aunt. The house has only two small rooms and a kitchen with a thatched roof, still under construction. A wall and the lavatory are not yet finished. The neighbourhood is home for other displaced families. 300 yards from their house is an army camp. Nearby is the school that Shangar attends, a small library and a small dispensary.

She recounted details of the family's displacement and deaths of relatives. Shangar has been displaced at least 5 times. His mother has worked in the Middle East for four years to financially help all her sisters' families. Shangar is a very quiet boy at home; she knows the separation from his mother affects him a lot, and that he lacks motherly love. While he is quiet, he is keen to learn. Since attending the Butterfly Garden, there has been much advancement in his creative work and indications of greater abilities. Aunt described her initial concerns about Shangar attending the Butterfly Garden, such as arrangements about food and discipline, but she was readily reassured. Shangar has described to her the Garden: the animals and birds, facilities for games, and the staff. He describes the kindness among the children and the staff; he loves attending.

She knows that children of different backgrounds come together in the Garden. She feels this can lead to reconciliation: "Harmony between ethnic groups and communities is vital. We all earnestly wait for ethnic harmony, if it comes there will be no room for violence and destruction. Ethnic and communal harmony will create peace among the children. If children from different ethnic groups mix together in games, they will befriend one another. Animosity will decrease and friendship will grow. The resulting harmony will not allow hatred to crop up. When people of other ethnic groups come into our village, they must be welcomed. We have to respect them without offending them. If so, respect and affection will arise in their community for our community. If other communities adopt such habits, there will be peace and amity in every community.

## C

Shangar has been in the Garden for 9 months. Basically, he is a lonely child, uncommunicative and emotionally depressed. His sense of self is vague and he still mourns the death of his father, killed in the ethnic conflict: tears come to his eyes when he talks about his father. Violence in his family has been atrociously intense. At least 3 of his uncles were killed, two remaining ones are alcoholic. The violent deaths of his uncles are still fresh in his mind. At night he has nightmares of army shooting and killing people. Now he lives with his aunt out of necessity, his brother lives in an orphanage. Another brother who was his emotional support and breadwinner left in the past year to find a job in the Middle East. Describing this all in the session, his eyes and face fill with sadness. When he thinks of his mother he cried.

After coming into the garden he has learned to accept the sad events and better handle his inner feelings. His attitude for future is very positive. Signs of resiliency are there and with time he will bounce back from his sadness. Since attending the Butterfly Garden, life in school, at home, with friends and within himself has improved. The most important aspect of the Garden has been making friendships, to help with his life problems, much of which has been caused by separation. Expressing feelings through art work, relating to the animators, and getting away from his depressing environment have all been helpful. The Butterfly Garden experience has helped him immensely. He was found nurturance and relationship with many people in the Butterfly Garden who have helped him to open up, communicate, grow and become hopeful. Now he enjoys school, playing with friends, doing art work, coming to the Garden. He handles better his sadness of his father's death and mother's separation, these are positive signs that his Garden experience has been something of a miracle.

## 2. Shalini

### A

Shalini is a 12 year old Tamil girl in Grade 6. Her teacher knows she has no mother lives with relatives. While she behaves normally with other children, she is dull in school with a pervasive sad and worried mood. In the Garden, she is active, clever and makes friends with other children and animators without attention to race or religion. While she behaves kindly and usually has a smile, on one occasion she sought out Cuckoo Daddy to confide her pain: she has recurrent memories and nightmares of her mother being assaulted by her father, her suicide and father's re-marriage.

In the Amma Appa Game, Shalini described her family's displacement from their border village due to fighting when she was one year old. They were displaced two more times before coming to a refugee camp. Here, when she was five, her mother committed suicide eating poisonous seeds. Within a year her father left, remarrying to a woman with five children. Shalini is very angry with her father because he is a drunkard, who often beat her mother after taking alcohol. Because of this, she committed suicide. When she went to see her father after remarrying, she heard him scolding his second wife, "I will kill you, just as I did my first wife!" She hates him and will have nothing to do with him. Shalini and her two siblings, an elder brother and a younger sister, now live with a maternal aunt in a resettlement community. In Aunt's household is Vinothini, another aunt who in fact is younger than Shalini herself, and who also attends the Garden [Case Study #3]. They are always quarrelling. When Vinothini complains to Aunt, Shalini gets punished, but wrongfully she claims; on enquiry Vinothini often turns out to be the cause of trouble. During the session, she expressed grief over her mother's death, and anxiety and fear of her father, who she holds responsible for her mother's death, and her younger aunt for her current troubles at home. Shalini felt the Amma Appa Game session was very helpful for her.

## B

In the first one-on-one art session, she played the 'name game' [V.4.2], playing with care and diligence. Her mood lifted as they played. Shalini shared her sense of loss over her mother, until other children interrupted the session. The next time, she was livelier, seeking out her creative companion to play and, from the outset, talked openly about her deeper worries. In the second session she made her 'art folio' [V.4.1]. Shalini selected the elephant stencil, on which she wrote 'Ammah' (mother). When asked why she selected an elephant, she said: "I read the story of a father elephant who suffered and laid down his life for others. Similarly, through suffering from the agonies caused by my father, she cared for us and protected us. Eventually due to intolerable trouble and agonies, she gave up her life, committing suicide. So I have the memory that my mother, too, in the likeness that elephant, suffered much in her effort to bring us up and died." As she shared more of her miserable feelings, a look of liberty appeared on her face. The creative companion was moved to console her, that her mother would wish to be with her, that she study well and become an eminent citizen.

A home visit was made to the house of her auntie, a small house in a resettlement community with an army camp nearby. The dwelling has a few small rooms, sparsely furnished with inadequate sleeping space and few possessions, with a roof made of cadjan and fertilizer bags. Her great-uncle is a farmer and provides for the household of six. He described how Shalini's family was attacked and nearly killed by the Indian Army; he felt sorry when he thinks of the agonies done by them. Her great aunt complained that her father remarried and does not look after the children despite her pleas: "If I get angry, I chase them and tell them I can't bear their educational expenses". Crying, Shalini's youngest sister described when her father got drunk and assaulted her.

According to Aunt, Shalini tells her many things about the Butterfly Garden, and proudly shares her artworks; her joy in attending is obvious. She has observed that Shalini is more interested in school, and now studies more at home. Aunt expressed her wish for ethnic harmony, "but people don't know how to build the desired harmony." Shalini's cousin-sister described an incident when two people were having an altercation; Shalini challenged them as to why they were fighting. They realized their fault, stopped their altercation and went away asking for pardon.

## C

Shalini is a resilient child, with a pleasant humour, bubbling with life, for which attending the Butterfly Garden was a great experience, bouncing her back to life. In the follow-up Amma Appa session, her sense of self had clearly improved. Feeling more positive and self-confident, she handles her anger towards her father better now. She holds him accountable for killing her mother, who she continues to long for, but her pains are less. Coming to the Butterfly Garden has definitely helped her, through play with friends, expressing her feelings through artwork, talking to animators and getting away from school. Light, hope and enthusiasm bubbles in her eyes. She is happy to be with both Tamil and Muslims without prejudice. She is fond of the donkey. She feels good within herself and relates to others pleasantly. She is very hopeful about the future; she aspires to be a doctor and to make a good living.

## 3. Vinothini

### A

Vinothini is 10 year old girl from a resettlement community. Her teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden because of behavioural problems at school: she steals, lies and fights with others. When she came to the Garden she was aggressive, hot tempered, careless in activities, belligerent. Always quarrelling, fighting and using bad words to other children. She is self-centered. She deserved individual attention and was referred for the genogram session.

Vinothini is the youngest of 12 children, 6 boys and 6 girls. Her parents died of natural illness; she doesn't remember them. Violence in their native village in 1988 displaced them to another village for 2 months, then to another for 2 years. From there they briefly went to the refugee camp. Finally they came to the resettlement community. She lived with an older sister with five children, but one of them is in a militant group, and there were problems so she came to live with the family of another sister also with five children. Sister hits her some times for not working for them.

One of Vinothini's brothers committed suicide by eating poison in 1996. Another brother was in the militant group and died. Two others were arrested and detained. They were told one had been killed but nothing is known about the other. Similarly, with the husband of one of her sisters, married which five children, he was arrested by the forces and disappeared. One of her sister took poison and died due to her troubles her husband, a liquor addict who would beat her up when drunk. So she committed suicide.

During the session she expressed anger and resentment towards her sister who scolds and canes her. She exhibited grief over the loss and deaths of family members. She has been traumatized due to the sufferings and ill feelings she has suffered. She is aggressive and often fights with other children. Having seen all sorts of unpleasant activities and troubles taking place in the refugee camp she has habits and words above her age. An intimate friend of hers has the same bad habits she has. Her present position is due to the environment she lived in. She does not respect elders- she fights with them too. On the positive side, she does have self-respect. Vinothini is glad of coming to Butterfly Garden. She must be given more attention in the garden.

**B**

The art work in the Cuckoo's Chariot was to make her art folio with an animal stencil and collage. She was adamant that she must keep it for herself. She selected a baby pig insisting that it be red. She talked incessantly for the two hour session about family, siblings, friends, school, teachers, during which time the creative companion was able to comfort her with words and presence.

By the end of the session she had completed a handsome baby pig that she was very pleased with. In her artwork she was demanding and particular- it must be attractive to her. She was easily distracted by any interruptions. In the process, however, she relaxed and became less agitated, a remarkable difference. Her art companion felt she would do well to engage in the Butterfly Garden activities and that she is receptive to advice. Animators, once they know her behaviour, can provide role modelling and help guide her social conduct. She needs to make friends among the other children and overcome her resentment and retaliation. He encouraged her to use the pig drawing as a reminder of her friendship and to help her control her anger.

Over the months, the garden program helped her come out of herself and understand her own feelings. Her exposure to children from different religions and ethnicities changed her attitude a lot. She became more affable and more cordial.

Vinothini loves nature very much. She often speaks about the flowers, birds and animals of the Garden. Her relationship with nature enabled her to relate to people more amicably. The program provided her a place to play with friends. Through art work and expression of feelings, by getting away from home and school, she began to relate to friends and animators in a new way. Time is not enough for all she could integrate and grow.

In the school visit, the teacher remarked that before coming to the Garden, Vinothini always fought with other children and was a big behavioural problem, stealing and lying. She was smart and her learning was fairly satisfactory, but she neglected home work. Since coming to the Butterfly Garden, there have been many positive changes: less thievery and lying, and better group activity, but if scolded she too would grumble. Progress in plays, religious activities, art, story creation, handicraft and singing. She contacts elders easily.

The home visit was at her sister's home where Vinothini had been staying for the past two months. Here sister explained Vinothini's family's displacement from the war and her troubles when she lived with other sisters. She explained that the suicide of Vinothini's brother was for family reasons, but that it also brought about Vinothini's father's death, who became mortally ill just after it. Six brothers or close relatives are killed or disappeared from the conflict. One of her sisters described an incident when Vinothini became very upset and angry, but retreated into her room where she was found holding her pig drawing made in the Cuckoo's Chariot and talking to it to help her get over her anger.

**C**

In the follow-up AAG took place a year later after her attendance ended She displayed greater calmness. Little by little she is learning to relate to people and friends more amicably. She is better about her self because she accepts herself. The problem in her heart is the confusion about the rules and social conduct.



She related well with all the animators. I found the child normal and happy, but also confused and disappointed. She was sad because she is no longer coming to the garden where she had such good experiences, the best of her life. When it stopped she felt letdown and disappointed by the adults.

She has been deeply affected by the numerous deaths in the family. She does not remember her parents or her grand parents and so many of her brother sisters' husbands have been killed. At the moment she is living with the third sister, widowed, with 5 children. She has been lived with other sisters too, and it is not clear why she shifts from house to house. Vinothini is a confused child; she herself is not sure about her roots. There is a talk that she is an adopted child. But she is looked after her well enough considering their poverty. She longs for her two dead brothers- she believes they would have supported her were they alive.

#### **4. Tharshini**

##### **A**

Tharshini is a nine-year-old Tamil girl from a resettlement community. Her teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden because her father was killed, and recently her aunt, who has been her primary caregiver, has died. She has had occasional outbursts of anger at school. In the Garden while she participates ably, she is very quiet, and is quite jealous when the animator's attention is directed to other children. Some individualized attention was called for so she was referred for a genogram session.

In the Amma Appa Game session, Tharshini described living with her maternal aunt's family. Her own family was displaced from their border village due to fighting. She was two years old when the army in the paddy field killed her father while he was haying. Tharshini's mother is mentally ill; and moves from place to place, staying with different relatives. Her sisters live with their paternal grandmother, whereas Tharshini has been living with her auntie, of whom she is very fond, but last year she died of asthma. Tharshini is very traumatized from the loss auntie and her father, and the separation from her sisters and mother. Because of all this she fears making deep acquaintance with others.

She is an amiable girl and visiting the garden is a happy event for her, but she is miserable inside with the loss of her aunt and father. She played the Amma Appa Game with interest, her expression changing as feelings of sadness, anxiety and fear came up.

##### **B**

In her first Cuckoo's Chariot art session, Tharshini chose the elephant stencil to make her folio cover [V.4.2] For her, the elephant depicted her aunt. She talked about her mother staying at another relative's house because she has mental trouble. Tharshini recounted how very fond she was of Auntie, and that she died suddenly due to asthma. Her husband was not at home at the time and the children had gone to school; only her son was there; in her dying moments she had asked for water. When Tharshini recounted this, she broke down crying, remembering how that last morning, Auntie had sent food to her and the other children at school. That she was not at her side when she died is an intolerable sorrow. Auntie had sent them to tuition (after school private classes); "now we are lagging behind in our studies". Tharshini would always show Auntie the books and report cards from school. When asked if Auntie would have been interested in her Butterfly Garden artwork, "I place everything I make at the Garden before her photo for her to see. Had she not been dead she would have looked at everything I am making," she said with a sigh. The Companion consoled her, saying "Though Auntie is dead, as she was fond of you, she will always look at your cleverness and your handicrafts". When she heard this, Tharshini's face shone with happiness.

At the time of the home visit, Tharshini's mother was staying there temporarily. The household is very poor with few possessions and no furniture, two pots in the kitchen and a suitcase. Tharshini's family had been displaced six times since the father died, sometimes taken in by Muslim families; they have no resentment towards other ethnic groups. Tharshini lives there with her aunt's two boys and two girls; her own two sisters live with her paternal grandfather for some years now. The household has been deeply affected by the aunt's death, she had been sick for some time before she died. She is fond of her uncle, who supports the household as a vegetable vendor. She tells him about the Butterfly Garden, but not to her mother. She brings home all the crafts and artwork she has made and places it in front of a photograph of auntie. Tharshini is always excited on days she goes to the Garden; she lays out her clothes the night before in restless anticipation. Her mother is happy about her daughter's participation in the program, and referred to the kindness and generosity of the staff, the full meal provided, and the program's relations with the school.

At school, Tharshini's teacher knew her for two years and observed that her participation and general performance in school activities had declined significantly since the death of her aunt. She was generally agreeable and helpful, but had outbursts of anger. Since attending the Butterfly Garden, no positive effects had been observed.

**C**

Summarizing the follow-up Amma Appa session, "In her 9 years, Tharshini has experienced a lot of separations both emotional and physical. Her father was killed by the army when she was small. Her mother is mentally disturbed. She lived with her aunt who gave her a lot of love, but she also died and Tharshini is helpless. The uncle and the cousins continue to show a lot of affection but she has not got over the pain of her aunt's death. She is confused within herself from the lack of sustained relationships in her life, and she longs for her aunt. She is still young to understand the impact of her negative experiences of life. Her school performance has decreased though she is capable. The Butterfly Garden is the only place where she speaks about her pain; she loves to be in the Garden. Yet her problem remains. She dreams of her aunt, that she visits her and consoles her. It will take a long time for her to leave her very painful life reality."

## **5. Kalaivani**

**A**

Kalaivani is a 10 years old Tamil girl from a resettlement community because her father was killed and difficulties in her home situation. In school she was quite inattentive, slouching at her desk and having little contact with others.

In the Amma Appa Game, Kalaivani described her family situation. She has an older sister (12) and a younger brother (7). She was a small child when her father was killed by the army in the border village where they lived; she does not remember him. Her father, his brother and a neighbour were tending the cattle when they were shot dead in an ambush. Kalaivani's mother works as a cook in town to feed her family. Her sister stays with her paternal aunt who is married to a businessman and has a family of four children. She has at least two uncles on her father's side and two aunts on her mother's- one aunt lost her husband, believed to be dead; she now works as a housemaid in Middle East. The other aunt married a soldier who was killed by militants; she has three daughters and now lives in her sister's house where looks after her two sons as well. Kalaivani's mother struggles to support the family. Her boss at the restaurant once helped with some money and dresses for festivals. Kalaivani says that the boss's daughter was jealous of this.

Her maternal grandfather's death is an unforgettable incident for her. He had been very kindly towards them all. When war troubles came to his village, most people fled, but her grandfather, who was elderly and infirm stayed at home and would not leave. The army blindfolded him, took him away and shot him dead. Kalaivani cannot forget him. She does not want to tell others about her family.

Kalaivani's face radiates calmness and joy. She is clever but she can be very stubborn. She dislikes for older sister; they often quarrel when she visits home. She has love and kindness towards mother, and sometimes fear, as when she gets in fights with her sister. She expressed deep sadness over the deaths, poverty and plight of her mother. She grieved for her grandfather and was depressed about the impoverishment of her family. She held ethnic resentment due to her father's death. Her insight into her plight was fairly developed. She loved to play the genogram and responded well to the session; she felt it was very helpful.

**B**

Visiting the Butterfly Garden is a happy event for Kalaivani. Initially she was inattentive and related to only a few selected people. However over the course of time there were significant changes: greater contacts with children in both ethnic groups as well as with animators. She became enthusiastic and got involved in many activities.

The home visit involved an interview with her mother. Only she and Kalaivani live in the house: the elder sister and younger brother live elsewhere. Kalaivani's father and paternal uncle were firewood sellers when in 1992 taking care of cattle, they were killed in an ambush set up by the army. Her father has 10 siblings, but there is little contact, and no financial help from them. Her mother has 2 sisters; they are all widows now from the war. Their husband's bodies were never found. She recounted how close Kalaivani was with her grandfather before he was killed, and that she feels the loss from his death very much.

Kalaivani's family was displaced several times, including a stay at a town refugee camp where there were many troubles by the army; they were living there when her husband was killed. They came to the resettlement community in 1996. Since she has been a widow she looks after the family working at a rice mill. At the time of the home visit, however, there had been no work for the past month and a half, and it was difficult to find enough food. Typically she leaves for work in the morning and when Kalaivani comes home from school she is on her own until her mother returns late in the evening.

Mother described many changes in Kalaivani since attending the Butterfly Garden. Kalaivani speaks well of the Garden, and has described the Garden as a place with birds and animals where she can learn games, singing, drama and stories. She gets up very early in excited anticipation on the days of the Butterfly Garden. She now has made friends with other children. She has improved in sewing and handicrafts. She recites songs and stories from the Garden for the children in the neighbourhood. She now likes to play with Muslim children. "I am very happy about her visit to the Butterfly Garden. We are happy that she plays with the children of all the communities and ethnic groups. Their games and cooperation will contribute to unity among the communities."

In the school visit, the principal and Kalaivani's teacher were interviewed. Whereas before, Kalaivani was not a happy child and didn't get involved in anything, after coming to the Garden, she is active and enthusiastic.

## C

In the follow-up genogram session, we learned Kalaivani was now living in a Hindu home for girls, her mother now living with one of her aunts. She described her family story, her father and his two brothers killed by the army, her sister living with an aunt, her brother living in a residential home. The family was displaced at least three times due to the violence. Mother tried to provide for the family by working and then with the small amount given out by government for welfare. Displacement and destitution are very much part of Kalaivani's life. She is a little afraid of Mother who sometimes beats her. She now goes to a new school, where the teachers discipline her with a cane, but she doesn't resent them for it. She has nightmares about her experiences of violence in the past. She longs for her dead father. She wishes her mother could be with her; her preferred guide is one of her aunts. She spoke about her friendship with a girlfriend who lives in the residential home with her.

Kalaivani is a lonely child, separated from her mother, sister and brother resulting in her experiencing relationships only superficially. Some support comes from her two aunts. In spite of the violence and life disruption, she is a happy child. She enjoyed the Garden and made good friendship with her favourite animator. She holds no prejudice against the Muslim ethnic group and has many friends among the Muslim girls. She loved everything that happened in the Garden: now, she lives with 15 other children in a different home, which is easier for her because of the Garden experience. Her saddest experience is the death of her father; her happiest experiences were in the Garden. She loves flowers and plants and the peacock.

In redoing the Amma Appa mat, Kalaivani worked out the death of the father and grandfather quite well: clearly the Garden experience has helped her to come out about her father's death, and its heavy burden has diminished. Now she is dealing with the pain of separation from mother and family; even though she is forced to live in a home, she is handling the emotional pain well. Kalaivani feels much better about herself, more confident, less shy. She relates to people affectionately. The experience of being placed in a home has not broken her spirit and she shows greater resiliency. She handles the challenges of her circumstances in a better way because of the Garden experience.

## 6. Sutharshini

### A

Sutharshini is a 12 year old Tamil girl from a resettlement community. Her school teacher has known her for 5 years. Her family has been displaced by the war. Her father, a labourer, is a liquor addict and there is a lot of physical abuse in the home. Shyness and fear mark her behavior at school; she doesn't like to attend. She doesn't take initiative in anything, but sits and worries. She is reluctant to have contact with other children.

At the Butterfly Garden, she also exhibited a lot of fear and shyness; she avoided taking part in many activities. She interacts with three children who happen to be her relatives, otherwise she makes little contact with others. She approached one particular woman animator willingly but avoids the others, especially the male animators. Based on these concerns, she was referred for a genogram session.

Prior to the session it was known that her family had been displaced from a village area under militant control and came to the resettlement community. Parents are alive, and she is the eldest of five children in her family. Due to the large family size, she lives with her maternal grandmother. It is known that her father abuses her mother. Speaking about family members reveals a confusing picture. With questioning she comes out with new facts, but inconsistently. It was quite heavy to play genogram with her but very revealing. We learnt about the death of 3 male members through shooting because of the ethnic conflict. She expressed sadness about her maternal uncle's death, maternal grandfather's death, and the separation of parents. She resents her father; because of his addiction to liquor there is no peace in the family. She resents the

policeman who shot her beloved uncle. Even though she has her father and mother, she is living with her maternal grandmother. We lack a lot of family background information about Sutharshini. But one thing is certain she is severely affected.

Sutharshini is very withdrawn and finds it difficult to relate with others: she generally fears all adults. She speaks slowly, interruptedly and cautiously. Emotionally, she expressed high levels of anxiety and fear. It is not clear what is the cause of the problem: she is a severely traumatized girl with a deep psychological or mental development problem. It will be interesting to observe her in the garden. She loves to sit quietly and do small handicrafts. She is very conscientious, mindful and concentrated. Art is another way for her to express her feelings. She has a good sense of colours and her expression of colours is very bright. Verbal communication is difficult but expression through art is easy for her. It could offer a break through the security walls that she has constructed for herself. Developing a close relationship will be important: it is through the Garden atmosphere and art play activities that the child can walk on the path of healing.

#### **B.**

When she came to a one-on-one art session, the first project was to make a greeting card with colourful paper cuttings and Bristol board. During this activity she shared some of her pain with her art companion (a woman). She described herself as the eldest in the family with a younger brother and four younger sisters. Her father is a fisherman. She spoke about the difficulties of her parents when they were displaced from their home; she got frightened talking about it. Now she lives in with her maternal grandmother; her parents call her to join them, but she does not go. Asked whether she wishes to, she said she wants to, but as they did not want her with them when she was young, she refuses to go with them now. When asked how she knows they want her to come, she answered "mother said", but when asked why she does not go she said, "fear". The session was interrupted when other children wanted to join in play.

The second session was to make a folio cover; this time was eager to take part showing keen anticipation and interest. She used colours carefully, so that they did not touch one another. To begin with and at the end she chose a dark colour. When asked, she explained that when she attained puberty she was with her maternal grandmother and not with her parents. She did not receive parental love: the dark at the start represented her lack of parental love. The dark at the end shows the lurking fear, lack of inner strength and lack of confidence in future life. The many colours in between the dark are for her pleasant experiences in the Butterfly Garden visits and her acquaintance with friends in the garden. The non-attachment of colours show her non attachment with the other children. It happened that, as she was making the picture, a man come by interested to take snapshots. She began to tremble and hold her stomach as if in pain. She could no longer continue with the decoration. The animator saw the need for more one-on-one sessions to help remove the darkness reflected in her lack of confidence in her future life. "She is a quite a contrast from other children: if she sees men or if they talk to her she shivers and trembles involuntarily with fear. I think a bad impression was established due to an agony suffered from her father or some other male(s). As she thinks all the males are cruel, she needs to have other more positive examples and ideas about males. She must be enabled to absorb good thoughts about people and the things around her."

When it came time for the next session, she approached the animator, keenly asking "Shall we play?". The folio cover project continued. She was noticeably more conversant than before and she spoke about some of her fearful experiences. There is a shop near her house run by a young man where she used to buy things. One day he grabbed her hand and made sexual advances; she got frightened and since then has stopped going there. On another occasion, she was walking to her aunt's house, when some of her cousins cast some sexually suggestive remarks and grabbed her arms. Another time, a grown up cousin hugged her. On another day when she was going to her aunt's home with her brand new dress another male cousin grabbed her and raised it up. That is all she was able to say about it. These incidents frightened her very much. Because of these sexual threatening incidences, she has become frightened of all men, seeing them as dangerous people.

Butterfly Garden participation: In the beginning of her attendance, she was friendly only with 3 children, but over time, she extended out to others little by little. Earlier she used to sit at the side of a woman animator silently, like a dumb person, some of the children would say. She was slowly encouraged to talk a little more and began to take part more in activities. When she talks to someone she trusts, her words gush out in a flurry. She trembled in fear if men were near or talking. Usually very hesitant to talk, in the last month or two she would occasionally talk to some of the male animators. She does not talk to Muslim children; if asked by staff, she will only do it in their presence. Asked why, she says she is afraid. With her fear, she says she has stomach pains. Formerly she didn't go to many of the activities but this slowly changed. Even so, doesn't participate in story telling, play and music activities. She wishes to do everything but her fears prevent her, and she lags behind. Generally, there has been advances in her than before, albeit modest.

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According to the teacher, Sutharshini was hesitant to have contact with children before she came to the Butterfly Garden; now, there is a little more interaction, and she is not so overcome with fear and shyness. Achievement in education was poor, and she didn't take initiative in anything. Now, after coming to the Garden she is good at the handicraft, art and needlework activities at school.

The home visit involved interviewing Sutharshini's grandmother with whom she lives since an early age due to her father being a liquor addict. The house is a small one, but comfortable with ample room to sleep. Food is available, but clothes are few. They are not poverty stricken. There is a jungle around their house. The adjacent house belongs to relatives.

Their native place was a village under militant control. They were displaced from there to another place for a year, and now they live in the resettlement community. Her grandmother said, "I brought Sutharshini here when she was one year old. Her parents had many children and so they had difficulties. So I brought this girl with me. Because her father hit her, she does not like to go to her parents". Sutharshini is a timid girl; her father's liquor addiction has made her timid. Now she lives in her uncle's home: he doesn't approve of her attending the Garden; this makes her still more fearful, but she very much wants to go. An older male cousin nearby also gives her troubles. All these factors contribute to her fear. No further information was provided.

After Sutharshini's attendance at the Garden, the grandmother has seen great changes in her; she now talks more. She visits her neighbors and plays with other children. In the school she talks to the teachers and she walks with a lighter step. She is happier, and is interested in school attendance. Grandmother herself was not concerned about Sutharshini attending the Garden, she has heard about the place, its structures, the flower garden, the activity programs (needle work, handicrafts and the artwork), the lunch program and refreshments. She is fond of visiting the old man tending the flower and herb garden, to talk to.

## C

In the follow-up Amma Appa session, she became frightened when she was walking with the guide (Fr. Paul) to Cuckoo's Nest, so the session was conducted by the research assistant, a woman, with Fr. Paul observing; this was acceptable to Sutharshini.

Sutharshini is 13 years old and she has 4 younger sisters and one young brother. Her mother is in the Middle East for work and her father is an alcoholic. Sutharshini lives with her maternal grandmother, maternal uncle, and cousin brother lives separately. Her grandmother is her confidant, primary care giver and guide. In the family there have been many ethnic conflict related deaths. Sutharshini had early experiences hiding in the jungle and submerged in the river: such frightful experiences bring many fears into her life. She has been traumatized by such violent activities. Her greatest traumatization has come from abuse by men. She is intensely afraid of men and there are strong suggestions that she has been both physically and sexually abused. She is angry with his father and has generalized anger to all men. Other males have contributed to her deep prejudice against men.

Sutharshini is a very special child. She has had a very bad experience which has traumatized her severely. She is very slow to speak, hesitant, frightened and suspicious. Her sense of self is limited. She is searching for an understanding of herself. But her heightened solitude prevents her from being open for growth. She is not able to explore her inner conflicts and develop coping systems to deal with life problems. She has no vision of the future. Over the time period of her Garden attendance, changes in her psychic self are subtle and minimal. Sutharshini needs gradual exposure to better role models of men which she can have in the Garden. Coming into the garden being with friends and dealing with her shyness and timidity helps her in the garden. In general the garden has been a positive experience for her.

## 7. Mahendran

### A

Mahendran is a 13 year old Tamil boy from a resettlement community. His teacher had known him for three years and that his father had been killed as militant and that his home situation was a difficult one. He had poor attendance and he was always fighting and in an angry mood.

In the Butterfly Garden, Mahendran was frequently picking fights with other children and frequently disrupting play activities with his behavior. One day, however, he became intensely curious in the genogram game when he saw another boy perform it. He insisted he be given the opportunity, so this was arranged..

Mahendran lives in with his mother, younger sister and maternal grandfather. Mahendran has two sisters. Mahendran's father is dead. He was a tailor when he married. After marriage he had trouble with neighbors and joined a militant group to take revenge on his enemies. He had trouble there, too and from

there went to Colombo where he joined in a different militant splinter group. He came back to Batticaloa as a militant. His father used to go to the temple on Fridays. One day in 1992, when Mahendran was 6, he was shot dead returning from the temple, by his brother who belonged to a rival group. A few days later, that brother was killed by the army.

Mahendran's widowed mother, aged 32, earns by weaving and manages to maintain her family. The family lived in a Tamil town until 1990 when they were displaced and lived in a refugee camp. Now they live in their own house. Mahendran's sister, aged 11, lives with her maternal aunt who is married, but has no children.

Since the father's death at the hand of his brother, Mahendran's family no longer has much acquaintance with his father's side family. This is fine with him. One of the uncles, unmarried, is also a militant, another is an alcoholic husband and, due to poverty, his wife went to the Middle East to find work. A maternal uncle died of snakebite. One of his great aunt's daughters was killed by the army, suspecting she was an extremist. After his father's death, his maternal uncles help support the family.

During the session, he expressed sadness over his father's death, anger with his uncle that shot his father and that, due to poverty and family conflict, many things are not possible for him to obtain. He expressed fear of the school principal. He exhibited severe grief and depression recounting his father's death and his impoverished family. He has been severely traumatized by the deaths, separation of his sister, and the ongoing family feud. A great deal of resentment was expressed. His insight into his plight was fairly developed. He felt the session was very helpful, he loved to play the genogram and he responded very well.

## B

In the Garden Mahendran was a fighting cock, and was a quite a handful with his aggressive behaviour. However, in the course of weeks and months attending, there were significant changes. His tendency to fight came down and he became much more amiable. He took part in each and every activity in the garden. One day he said: "I am well reformed after I came to the Butterfly Garden. Now I don't fight with anybody!" When asked how this could be, he said, "At the start I would fight with another boy. When complaints reached the animators, they said I will be expelled: I feared they would expel me if I fought so, I stopped fighting. Now I don't wish to fight with other children".

Initially he came only on Sundays as arranged through his school. Six months into the nine month program, his mother left to work in the Middle East and he came under the care of his maternal aunt. For the last three months he came to the Garden on his own, finding his own means to get there, often walking several hours. He declared that he wanted to work as an animator in future. He became obedient and cooperative with the animators and other elders. He made good contact with the Muslim children, and regularly took part in activities with them.

The home visit involved an interview with his maternal aunt and other family members; Mahendran was not present at the time. We learned that Mahendran's father joined the militant splinter group two months after his marriage. He was a polygamist. In the movement he was constantly fighting and beating people. He was a drunkard, and particularly violent after drink. For the sake of security, the family lived in a militant camp for three years. Then the family was displaced due to the violence and came to the refugee camp in town where they lived for two years, then another camp for two years. His father rarely visited home, but he was fond of Mahendran. His father died while they lived in the camp; they had his dead body. After some days it was learned that his brother in the opposing militant group shot him.

Father used to hit his wife routinely. For more than two years after, his mother had hysterical fits and outbursts of violence. She would scold and beat her children as well as her own mother. Due to these troubles grandmother moved to another aunt's house. Then Mahendran began physically and verbally retaliating against his mother, hitting and throwing things at her. Mahendran's mother refused to give him rice if he skipped school. If asked why, she would say he would reform only if he's made hungry. With her illness she stopped going for work. During this period of no work some relatives provided her with food. At last due to poverty she went to the Middle East a few months ago.

Now Mahendran lives with his youngest maternal aunt. When enquired of him she said "he is unruly, very troublesome, doesn't listen to anybody and retorts if scolded. I fear he might run away somewhere." He has threatened to join a militant group if his family is too hard on him. Formerly, he was untidy, completely neglected himself, not washing and wearing dirty clothes. Now, since attending the Butterfly Garden he looks after himself well. However, his anger and fighting behaviour has not diminished much at



home. If somebody comes to fight with family members he will go to fight against the offenders. He is very happy on the days of his visit to Butterfly Garden. He is unruly at home.

Mahendran has three paternal aunts and four uncles. The one who shot his father died in an attack. They have no contact with his father's people: Mahendran does not want to talk to them.

Mahendran's house is a few hundred metres from an army camp, with no houses between them. There is a lot of tension in the neighbourhood. After liquor they sometime come to the house fight. If they do, Mahendran goes forward with a rod to counter them. If asked why, he would say "Should I stand idle when they come to attack aunt and uncle?" An elder uncle is a liquor addict; sometime he helps the family. But one day he scolded Mahendran who retorted. After that, uncle stopped talking to Mahendran. He often fights with his cousin sister. Now his troubles have increased. Mahendran has three maternal aunts and three maternal uncles, one of whom died of snake bite. The others are married and live close by.

Mahendran now lives with aunt. His uncle aged 30 is a mason and their bread winner. Mahendran obeys him, but only just. His two younger sisters live with another aunt nearby. One of Mahendran's first cousins died in an attack. He did not know him closely, but after his death, Mahendran and his friends, made plans to join a splinter group for vengeance. When she heard about this, his aunt feared the worst; bad friends will spoil him. Now, she waits for Mahendran's mother to return from the Middle East: the moment she comes, Aunt will hand the boy back over to mother with relief, she hopes.

He has been trouble even after coming to the Butterfly Garden, but he attends to himself, bathing and washing his clothes; on the days for Butterfly Garden visits he gets everything ready. "When he comes back he proudly says, " I myself did all these things here. Today the food was good. Everyone there is fond of me. That place is a happy place." He starts talking about it, before we can ask him about it," his aunt said. "As other children were going to the Butterfly Garden, we were not worried about his going. He tells us that all at Butterfly Garden are very fond of him, and he gets good meals there. Also he said they do handicrafts, drama and story making there. He was also very happy about playing with the other Muslim children. He described that Garden as a place with birds and animals and where he can learn games, drama, drawing, handicraft, stitching and stories there. He said " the brothers and sisters at the Butterfly Garden are very good and they are very fond of me. There we get a good meal with big piece of fish and other tasty curries. We can play well. No one scolds us. I only want to go to Butterfly Garden, nowhere else". She is very happy about his Butterfly Garden visits; when he is there, she has confidence and peace. She feels he would be reformed if he could continue to go: "We worry when we think the period is going to end". She asked that Butterfly Garden staff visit her more often.

The principal knows the family situation. There is bad talk about his mother in the village. When he was small he was ignorant of this; now he is grown up, when these remarks fall on his ears he may be mentally affected. The fundamental reason for his bad behaviour is poverty. In school he was belligerent. Now he is somewhat more disciplined. His ability has improved in handicrafts, drama, story telling and art. He takes initiatives in activities. He is obedient to the teachers.

## C

The follow-up Amma Appa session took place at the end of the program cycle. For Mahendran, the Garden has been a miraculous experience. After coming to the Garden on Sundays, he began coming also on Thursday and Friday, borrowing money from his grandmother to get there by public bus. He spends extra time in the garden and helps the animators. He has a good sense of self now, more self-confidence, and initiative. He has a capacity to reach out to others. He spoke of his newly found friend, a Muslim boy. He has learned to accept the death of the father, and more recently he has been separated from his mother who has gone to the Middle East for work.

Mahendran loves the Garden where he has become creative, productive and enthusiastic. He paints well, does murals, handicrafts, enjoys the clay activities, story telling and theatre. His attitudes towards the future is very positive and goal oriented. He wants to educate himself and lead a meaningful life. Resentment and prejudice are minimal in his life after coming to Butterfly Garden. He relates well to the Muslim community without any problem. He has learned to reach out to other ethnic groups and religious denominations. He is very creative, courageous and humorous. He is beginning to help the animators to animate. His future ambition is to be an animator in the Butterfly Garden.

The family is relieved and released when he is in the garden. However, at home, he has become more violent refusing to take any guidance from anyone and threatening to join militant groups. Mahendran's family household is filled with violence. Militant groups, alcoholic problems, displacements, separation from his sisters, have been traumatizing for Mahendran. He says he loves his grandmother and aunt but they do not understand what is going on within him. Mahendran's experience of the garden has increased tension in the



household. His is an important case to follow. As he gets in touch with his creative self, the destructive self emerges which he has been suppressing for a long time. The Butterfly Garden experience has helped him to express well his feelings, both positive and negative passions.

## **8. Vasuki**

### **A**

Vasuki is a 12 year old girl from a Tamil village. Her teacher has known her for years, that her parents are separated and that her brother is a constant troublemaker. Vasuki is always sitting in class with a worried face; she is sometimes afraid playing with other children. She can be a nuisance at school- talking ill about others and often is at the bottom when trouble happens. There have always been complaints about her.

When she came to the Butterfly Garden, she would join activities and was always eager to take her arts and crafts home possessively. However, she tries to get the animators to do what she wills, rather than make her own effort. Other children initially like Vasuki, and she can be friendly, but this is often short-lived. Then trouble crops up with some fighting and they want to be away from her. She is by nature aggressive and sometimes she is doesn't know how to share activities with other children. With the animators, she shares some of her problems. There are many afflictions in her broken family: she loves only those who satisfy her needs. While she loves her father and mother, at the same time she harbours great anger too. She hates some of her relatives, because they hate her family. She does not understand the value of good conduct expected by the teachers, and the concept of give and take in play. Given all this she was recommended her for a genogram session.

In the Amma Appa game, she laid out her family. Her mother is separated from her father and works overseas. She has two older brothers. For the past year Vasuki and her eldest brother have lived in her maternal aunt's house. The other brother lives with his maternal grandmother. She has six maternal aunts and one uncle, and two paternal aunts and two uncles.

10 years ago, Vasuki's father married his domestic servant as his second wife. He has has four children from that marriage and has no contact with Vasuki's family any longer. He is a liquor addict. For the past four years Vasuki's mother has been working as a housemaid in the Middle East. She also re-married, to someone in Kandy; she continues to have contact, and occasionally she comes to see her and her relatives. Since mother went to the Middle East, Vasuki and her brothers lived in their maternal grandmother's house. Last year when mother came home there was conflict in the family; some of her jewelry and money was stolen. As a result of that conflict the brothers moved into live with the aunt. Now one of them has gone to Colombo to be a servant in the house of another aunt. Both brothers liquor addicts. Vasuki has two paternal uncles and two paternal aunts. One aunt and her daughter died of eating poison: the daughter committed suicide and because of that, mother also killed herself. Another uncle contracted blood cancer and died.

Her uncle and her mother are now the bread winners for the family and Vasuki's physical needs is sufficiently taking care of by Aunt, her confidant and guide; she loves Aunt, as well as her mother. Her cousin sister living in the house is her rival, abusing her verbally and physically. In the house there are three boys and two girls living with her. One cousin brother was arrested by the army because he helped militant groups and is now in prison. Vasuki's grandmother and another aunt often quarrel with Vasuki's family and that of aunt, so Vasuki does not like them; the feuding aunt often scolds and hits her, and she refused to stay with her. She mostly plays with her paternal aunt's grand child who is in her class at school. Vasuki is stubborn and angry-natured. She often quarrels with her peers. She reveals her secrets with her friends. Also she shared her problems with the music teacher.

During the session she answered all the questions patiently. She spoke openly about her problems, cried when talking about her father. Playing the Amma Appa Game, her facial expression constantly changed, expressing sadness over her parent's separation and anger over her father's second marriage, and her aunt and grandmother who threw her and her brothers out after they stole her mother's belongings. She fears her mother might fully forsake her, and is anxious whether she will ever have a happy future. She is in deep depression because of the lack of parental love and presence. Vasuki is happy to be coming to the Butterfly Garden but while she needs intensive care and her own conduct is a problem for her as well as others.

### **B**

When she was invited to the Cuckoo's Garden, Vasuki was eager to take part, but she wanted to bring a friend with her. She insisted despite being told that it was just meant for her alone. Then she wanted one of the animators or Cuckoo Daddy to attend instead. Once she started to in the tasks of making the art folio, however, she settled down and became more accepting and happy. During the drawing, painting, glueing and cutting she spoke about her family with little prompting. She made two kittens and cut them out. She decided to make the one for her Butterfly Garden portfolio first, before the one to take home. She glued the kitten and

completed a beautiful collage. It really attracted her and she was very pleased. The session came to an end and lunch was served. After the lunch she followed the same animator to play using clay. At the end of the day she proudly displayed her folio cover to the other children in the closing circle. She now insisted that she must take the kitten home, which was granted.

Next week, she eagerly wanted to make the second art folio meant for home. Asked about the last one, she had shown it to family at home, her friends, teachers, and even to bystanders. During the session she shared more about her family, relatives and school. When the collage cat was completed, she wished to make puja (ritual offering). The animator saw that Vasuki is rough by nature and childish, and it is better to let her have her own way for some time. Through giving her personal attention and modelling more appropriate behaviour, change can slowly come about.

At the beginning of coming to the Butterfly Garden she was unruly and wouldn't obey, listen or respect the animators and other children; as in the school, so at the Garden. In the months that followed she behaves much better with less disobedience. She gets along better with others; she mostly likes Muslim children. Earlier she didn't have self confidence. Now she comes forward for everything and does everything. She is clearly fond of attending the Butterfly Garden. According to the animators, the love she didn't receive at home she receives at the Butterfly Garden. She is pleasant. There is a great change in her. One day she said, "I have found my self very much after my coming to the Butterfly Garden. I don't fight with anybody" She used to brood a lot at home; now she is better able to bear troubles at home. The pleasure she has at the Butterfly Garden outweighs all the cares elsewhere.

The home visit included meeting her aunt, her two daughters and Vasuki's older brother. Her troublesome situation at home was discussed. Her brother is a drunkard and often gets into trouble with others; he changes where he lives often and his behavior affects Vasuki. But even if things are unpleasant in her great aunt's house, she has to stay there; there is no other place to go. Before coming to the Butterfly Garden Vasuki was a troublesome child according to her aunt, the primary caregiver. She had frequent quarrels with other children. She hit them, talked ill of them, disrespected elders, and caused numerous problems for the family. She neglected herself and her clothes. After coming to the Butterfly Garden, however, there are great changes in her. Now she plays with other children peacefully. Quarrels have minimized and she generally more civilized. The family is genuinely appreciative, thanking the Butterfly Garden for the favourable change that have come over her. Her interest in school attendance has increased. She gets up early on the days she attends the Butterfly Garden. She often talks of her visits to the Butterfly Garden, describing to Auntie the facilities for games, the animals and birds, and that everyone is fond of her and kind. She has said nothing bad about it. She has talked about the Muslim children, the riddles they taught her, and her contributions in games, songs, stories and handicrafts.

Visiting Vasuki's school, her teacher also remarked about a great change after coming to the Butterfly Garden. Her behavior is quite reformed, and there has been no complaints at all against her. This is a great surprise. She comes forward to take part with good effort. She is well advanced in handicrafts and arts done in school. Her interest in school has increased and now attends regularly.

### C

In the follow-up Amma Appa session, Vasuki's progress since the first session was evident. She Vasuki feels very happy with her personal self. She feels much better at handling her feelings of resentment and jealousy. When she first came into the garden she was craving for nurturance and love. The animators had a problem with her; she was constantly quarrelling, fighting and hurting others. Now she has worked with her feelings of need for love. She is more balanced. Now she loves to play with others and share things with others. The garden experience has helped her to accept reality. In her life problems she had to deal with father mother separations and living in isolation with the aunt. She disclosed nightmares she has occasionally that her mother beats her and goes away forever: she fears that she will leave her and abandoned her.

Her future is more hopeful and more oriented. She wants to study well and learn a trade to earn money. Her resentments towards parents, cousins and friends decreased after coming to the Garden. Her attitude towards other ethnic groups has improved immensely. The garden has helped her to play with different socio-economic, religious -ethnic groups of children without prejudice. When asked what she likes best about coming to the garden, she replied, "Playing together with children from other ethnic groups without prejudice and being more hopeful about the future" She is very fond of the garden. "I wish I could live in the garden for ever. Can we come to the garden to the end?"

Coming to the Butterfly Garden has been extremely helpful. Most helpful has been exposure to different people and good relationship with them. Expressing feelings through artwork and the relationship with animators have also been important. After coming into the garden she is more happy vibrant and eager for more life. She is now a pleasant person with which she was not when she first came. Definitely the Butterfly Garden has been a healing experience for Vasuki.

## **9. Chandra**

**A**

Chandra is a 11 year old Tamil girl from a resettlement community. In school she is very shy and often looks sad, so the teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden. In the Garden she tended to stay close to only one male animator and a few of her classmates. She looked worried and often would not take part in many of the activities, so she was invited to an Amma Appa session.

In the Amma Appa session we learned that her father was shot dead by the army when she was three years old. He was a vegetable vendor. Her family fled their native village due to the violence in 1990. For two years they lived with grandparents and then she and her mother moved to live with an uncle, her mother's younger brother. Uncle is a fisherman who has two children He treats her as one of the children without any partiality. Her maternal grandparents live with them as well; Grandfather goes fishing and helps support the household. Her 18 year old brother stays with an aunt close to a rice mill where he works and supports them with his wages. He comes to visit on days when he is not working.

She has two paternal aunts, both married, one with three children, and two unmarried uncles continue to live near their native village. They visit occasionally but she doesn't know much about them; if her mother visits them, she does not take her with her, saying that it would disturb her education. On the maternal side, she has an uncle, who has a deformed leg. A year ago the army arrested him when he was fishing, suspecting that the injury was from terrorist activity; he remains in detention. She has two maternal aunts, both married with separate families.

Chandra does not leave home to play with friends lest her mother punish her. If she has any quarrel with them she does not tell her mother who has told her that even trouble at school must be settled in school and must not be brought home. She likes her mother; at the same time she is afraid of her mother's rebuke. Chandra is a very shy girl, hesitant, and low in energy. When invited to draw a picture, she didn't attempt it, saying she couldn't. When first asked about her father she started crying; by and by, she stopped. She did not reveal some information, e.g. that her uncle at home has children of his own; this later became evident in casual conversations with her friends. She appeared to be severely depressed, sad and introverted. The loss of her father has deeply affected her. Even though her uncle looks after her all right, she feels the absence of a father in her life very much; while other children have a father, she doesn't, and this is reflected in resentment against her family and sadness. Loss of the family breadwinner resulted in much economic hardship.

**B**

After attending the Amma Appa session, she became more comfortable being in the Garden. She participated in more of the activities and was less shy around the animators. However, three months into the program she attained puberty and for this reason she stopped coming to the Garden. There was no follow-up with home and school visits or a second Amma Appa session.

## **10. Thulasi**

**A**

Thulasi is a ten year old girl from a Tamil town. Her teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden due to the conflict related death of her father and her reluctance to participate in school activities: she completes her school work and does not cause trouble for others, but she is shy and reserved.

In the Butterfly Garden she involved herself in activities in a slow careless way, with a "never mind" dull attitude. Yet if she makes something she protects it with pride and vigilance. She is friendly enough to others irrespective of race or religion, yet she is often on her own, and likes the quiet Cuckoo's Nest. She was referred for a genogram session to understand her better and engage with her.

In the Amma Appa Game she related that her family lived bordering a Muslim village. With the outbreak of violence in 1990 her father was caught and killed by the army. His body was "garlanded", a car tire put around his neck and set afire; this her mother saw. Thulasi was two years old at the time and she does not remember him, yet she longs for her father. They left their home and now live in their maternal grandmother's house; where there is an army camp nearby. Her grandmother works in the

Middle East as a housemaid to help support the family. Thulasi lives with her sister and brother, mother and maternal uncle, who is studying at school. He, at times, punishes Thulasi, but not abusively; he also helps her in her study. Two other uncles, one of them married with a child, were shot dead by the army after Thulasi's father's death. Thulasi's eldest maternal aunt was married, but separated from her husband who had a drinking problem. They had three children, the eldest, Thulasi's cousin, who she was close to, deserted the family and joined the movement and was killed in an attack.

During the session she expressed sadness, anger, and fear in the course of telling her story. There was evidence of depression and psychological trauma in the form of low energy, lack of initiative, and scattered mind from her many losses and disrupted family. Her level of intelligence and comprehension was low. Her sense of self-identity is not clear and therefore she is not in touch with herself. She calls her mother sister, her grandmother mother. Her emotions are dry, speaking of the death of dear ones as a matter of fact. Thulasi has an innocent demeanor and is seen as cute, affectionate and agreeable. Therefore she does not get the real help she needs. Underneath she is a very severely disturbed child and shows signs of restlessness and destructive behavior, unable of concentrate or relate well to others.

**B**

Thulasi likes coming to the Butterfly Garden. Besides, she says she is fond of celebrations and festivals. She does not have the idea that work must be done orderly and properly. She is not absorbed in any work. She is attention seeking: for example, some children may be singing a particular song together, but she will start singing an altogether different song to be contrary. When others are engaged together in an activity, she will not join in, but then leaves to be on her own. She shows indifference if other children tease her. Over the months of attending the program there were changes for the better and she shows more interest. She likes to tell stories such as in the activity centre where children make clay figures and generate stories based on the various images.

In the School, her teacher has noticed that Thulasi is behaving smoothly and more happily since coming to the Butterfly Garden. Her interest in group activities has developed and there is progress in volunteering, her participation in singing and dancing in the school's religious activities, a weekly assembly that includes singing Hindu devotional hymns. The school principal has noticed her increased participation. Her education performance has not changed much but there is progress compared to before.

In the visit to her home, Thulasi's mother expressed her initial concern about her child attending the Butterfly Garden, but was reassured by the teachers' involvement and the reliable transportation arrangements. Thulasi has described to her many aspects of the Butterfly Garden site, the gardens, the play activities and the staff. She is fond of going to the Butterfly Garden where she does not feel the time passing. Her mother remarked that there have been changes at home; she is less quiet, more playful and is talking more. Her home life is marked by neglect and indifference by her caregivers. The children often go to school without breakfast and return to an empty home.

**C**

In the follow-up session, it was evident that the family and school have not identified her as a special child, a slow learner in need of remedial education, but such attention is not available. Whether the garden has helped her is questionable; she has difficulty finding the necessary creative frame of mind. No activities grip her and she remains relatively untouched by activities, animators and the garden experience. Only at the second genogram did we realize she is a special case. While some modest positive changes have been observed, Thulasi's potential may be limited by factors beyond her traumatic experiences and the situational factors in her family.

## **11. Anjala**

**A**

According to her teacher, Anjala lost her father due to the conflict. She comes from a poor family; her mother works for little money. She is quiet, reserved, and very shy; she has abilities, but no facility for development.

In the Butterfly Garden she appeared indifferent, showing little enthusiasm in activities. She has an inferiority complex, often remaining silent and interacts poorly with other children, usually her classmates. She had little contact with staff apart from one female animator. She was invited to the Amma Appa Game hoping to help her self confidence and help her open up and talk.

Anjala is a 12 Years old Tamil girl living with her mother, sister and maternal grandmother. Her family is very poor. Anjala's father was a mason. She told the story that in 1990 when she was 2 years old he went

north to Trincomalee for security reasons and lived with her relations. A few years later she and her mother went to Trincomalee to look for him, but couldn't find him. She missed school exams because of the trip and consequently is one grade behind. There is a rumour that he had re-married there, but they have been without contact since the day he left.

Anjala's mother does weaving in a Muslim town nearby to make what income she can for the family. Since her mother works grandmother looks after her, and is her emotional support and advisor. Anjala has little sentiment for mother who often hits her. Similarly she dislikes her sister and they often quarrel. Anjala's mother has four brothers, all married of no help to Anjala's family. She doesn't visit their houses and has little wish for contact with her cousins. She prefers her friend Suhiladevi. Anjala hates one of her uncles, because he hit her mother one day when he was drunk. Her worst experiences the loss of her father, and her uncle hitting her mother under liquor; which both bring up sadness and anger in her. She fears gunshots, which she often hears from the army camp nearby at nights. She also fears an adult man who frightened her some years ago saying he would take her to Colombo where he works. Happy events have been coming to the Butterfly Garden and her relationship with one of the animators.

During the session, Anjala was hesitant and gave her responses slowly. She was very tense. Even during the closing meditation she was tightening her face muscles. Anjala appears severely traumatized; she has no intimate relationship with anyone, including her only sister. Other adults are not close to her and some of them quite intimidate her. All these experiences make her a lonely child, afraid, timid, hesitant, depressed, and distant. She is not a happy child; in the Butterfly Garden activities happiness has to be forced out of her. But she has the psychological resiliency for healing. She is very direct in her expressions of feeling and if she does not like someone, even her own sister, she says so. The session was felt to be helpful and after the closing meditation she felt comfortable and peaceful, and went away laughing.

## **B**

In the home visit, the interview team met with Anjala's mother. She recounted that in 1990 one day, Anjala's father went to his work as a mason; he never came back. On inquiry people told her the army had taken him. "We went to the army camp and made inquiries. They said they did not arrest him. Days passed, but he did not return. We went to as many camps as possible. He was not to be seen. Some said he went to Trincomalee and married there. We went there too in search of him. He was not there. Some said he hid himself on hearing we were going in search of him. I don't believe that. Had he been alive he would have come to see this girl. Nine years have passed since his disappearance". As she told this story Anjala's mother cried deeply and was grief stricken. Her brother too was arrested and taken by the army; he also has never been seen again. These disappearances causes worry to Anjala: "Had they been alive we would not have suffered to this extent. On the third day after Anjala's father's arrest, the army came to our home. They expelled us from our house and set fire to it. Now they dwell there." They were displaced to different places for three years; presently they live in the vacant house of a relative a few hundred metres away from an army camp. Mother goes to work in a weaving shop in the morning and returns in the evening. No cooking is done at noon; they eat only at nights. Grandmother lives with them and looks after the children. There are aunts and uncles, but they are not of any help and don't visit. There are three families in the neighbourhood they are on good terms with, but generally neighbours aren't co-operative and there are tensions.

Her mother is pleased about Anjala going to the Butterfly Garden: "Before she came to the Butterfly Garden she was silent, did not talk to others. Now she is befriending others and talking to them. I am very happy over her present activities." Anjala tells mother everything going on in the Butterfly Garden: the food and drink in the lunch, the storyteller's narrations and the acting in dramas; she has not said anything unpleasant. She has recited the songs and stories for the people at home and laughed. She talks about her "cousins", "uncles" and "aunts" in the Garden who fond of the children and coach them in games. Before this, Anjala never mixed with other children playing games. After going there she is improved in co-operation, and talk with others. This was confirmed by some neighbours: Anjala was typically withdrawn and almost always alone around the house; when visitors came, she would make herself scarce. Now they notice she is interested to meet people and she is seen more with other children.

In the school visit, her teacher says she has ability but does not come forward. She is responsible and capable of finishing her work. She is softly approachable, but timidity limits her. Since Butterfly Garden she is seen behaving fairly well, volunteering to a certain extent, with advancement in group activities. The school principal has noticed more self confidence. She is able to actively present in the classroom "show and tell", whereas before she did not. Both at the school and in the neighbourhood, the story that Anjala's father is alive and remarried elsewhere continues to be told, although there is no basis whatsoever. This is typical of what sometimes happens in "disappearance" cases.

## C

In the follow-up session, Anjala laid out her family in the cards. She described her father's 'disappearance' when he went for work one day; there is also a talk he deserted the family, but she doesn't believe it. The mother is the breadwinner of the family. Severe poverty is a major factor in her life. She is malnourished and physically feeble. Her education too is affected because of poverty. She finds it difficult to communicate. She does not want to remember anything that is too painful an experience for her. She seems to be in a state of depression, controlling her feelings by denying. She mentioned an adult who constantly intimidates her and of whom she has an aversion.

In summary she continues to feel poorly about her self. Her sense of self is only little improved coming to the Garden: how she relates to people and participates in activities leaves much to be desired. In general she plays with children without prejudice against anyone. Communication is difficult; she hides a lot of resentment, anger and painful feelings. There is a lack of resiliency in her; she is pre-occupied, unable to laugh; she doesn't know how to relax her tense facial muscles. She says that nothing has happened to her, refusing to accept that she has learned from others because of her fear of personal reflection. She seems to be helpless. She loves the garden more than home or school. This is very understandable because here she finds nurturance and acceptance. She needs a lot of help accompanying her is vital and follow up on her progress is suggested.

## 12. Uthayasri

### A

Uthayasri is an 11 year old boy from a Tamil town.. His teacher for the past knows his family has been displaced and is very poor. He is often worried, maybe over family problems. His father, a labourer, is a liquor addict and there is physical abuse in the home. He was reluctant to relate with others. In the Butterfly Garden he was frequently quiet and worried, and reluctant to relate to elders. He had a sad expression and did not talk freely with other children. He was invited to the Amma Appa Game.

Uthayasri lives with his father, mother, one elder sister and two younger brothers. His father works as a mason and is an alcoholic. He physically abuses the whole family. Uthayasri's mother looks after the family, caring for their needs and supporting the children's education. He is very close to his mother, distant from his father. He has three paternal aunts and uncles, which though physically separated, he is close to them emotionally. He has two maternal uncles and one aunt, who live far away; he longs to see them. Uthayasri's paternal grandparents are living and he is close to his grandfather is his guide. The maternal grandmother loves him very much. He has an uncle who is physically handicapped. His best friend is the boy who comes to the Butterfly Garden and he is at the same age.

Uthayasri is a forthright person. He is plagued with fears, that God will punish him if he does anything wrong. He loves nature and longs to have animals and birds in his house. He loves the doves in the garden. He loves the garden so much that he would prefer to come every day to the garden. Uthayasri loves to play the different games with his friends. His ambition is to find the good job so that he can support his mother and sister and lessen their pain.

### B

The visit to Uthayasri's home was in the town, the native place of his father, where he lives with father and mother, sister, brother, a household of six. Earlier they lived elsewhere where he was born. They were displaced in 1991 due to violence, the family living and wandered in jungle areas for three years. Then they moved to the town into a relative's house for three years; now they live in their own house. Uthayasri's father was a labourer to begin with, then he went to the Middle East to work for three years; he came back home in 1995. Wherever he goes, Uthayasri's father is a liquor addict and trouble maker. Due to frequent boozing he has troubles with neighbors, who beat him up. One day an army officer asked him for his identity card. He rebuked the officer, saying "What are you asking me?" The army men arrested him and tortured, hung him upside down for three days. Uthayasri saw this personally and worried greatly. Father was eventually released by the help of others. He spends most of his earnings on liquor before bringing what remains, if any, home. He goes away for periods of time. He fights with his own brothers, and when others plead him to stop, he tells them to mind their own business. One of his sisters helps the family, but will only talk to his wife and children, not him. He beats Uthayasri's mother. When he sees this happening, Uthayasri trembles; all the children fear father.

In the school visit, we learned that, since attending the Butterfly Garden Uthayasri's teacher has seen him happier and behaving better with other children. There has been progress in his schoolwork, relationship, extramural activities, leadership and role playing. He is now capable of completing work and showing responsibility. He volunteers and there is progress in art and handicrafts.

In the Butterfly Garden, he was initially worried and reserved, friendly only with a few selected Tamil children. Gradually he extended his contacts to other Muslim and Tamil children. He shared his home difficulties with an animator. He never fails to attend the Butterfly Garden every week, where he began to escape his sadness and heal some of his worries. Over time, his attendance made great changes in him,

### C

In the follow-up session, Uthayasri re-told his family situation in the genogram. Uthayasri's greatest source of trauma is his alcoholic father. He went to the Middle East for work, but was arrested for alcoholic abuse, punished and sent back home. He is the family breadwinner but he drinks much of the money. Uthayasri's father physically abuses his mother and the children get involved: they too are threatened, intimidated and physically abused. Uthayasri has nightmares of his father beating him. His saddest experience is the physical beating of the mother by father. He hates to see his mother beaten up. Sometimes they go starving because there is no food. He wants to find a job to take care of his mother. It is this energy that motivates him to live. At the time of the follow up, Uthayasri was particularly depressed because his father was drinking more and the physical abuses in the home was worse. Uthayasri is close to mother and his siblings. They find emotional support in each other when the father frightens them with drunkenness and abuse. His paternal grandfather is his moral guide and one of his cousins is the tension diffuser when the house environment becomes tense and frightening.

His experience at the Butterfly Garden has been healing for him, but the program is over. He longs for the Garden. His experience with the place has been one of healing relationships and peaceful interactions. Nevertheless, his relationships with the animators are superficial because he is a frightened child.

For Uthayasri, talking to ducks, peacock, deer and elk are experiences of relief and opportunities for happiness and joy. He loved the storytelling. He grew with the opportunities to play and experience moments of inner peace, in times of frightening experiences from his father.

## 13. Raheema

### A

Raheema is eight years old Muslim girl. Her school teacher has known her for one year and that her father was killed by militants. The child is at a lower standard than normal in everything, so she referred her to the Butterfly Garden. In the Garden she was always silent. She related only with a few other Muslim children and animators. She did not take part many activities and is reluctant to relate with elders. She was invited for a genogram session.

Raheema is an 8-year-old child whose father was shot dead when she was small. She now lives with her maternal grandmother and two sisters. Her mother is in the Middle East working. The girl appears highly disturbed or traumatized, completely disoriented and restless. She was constantly scratching the Amma Appa mat, trying to damage the cards, and shifting them everywhere. She moved from her seated position onto the Amma Appa mat itself. It was frustrating session for the guide and not much information was forthcoming. She could not remember details such as ages of the family members, how many uncles and aunts she has, whether she likes to play at home or in the garden, or whether she prefers one thing to the other. She loves to play she says, but does not like birds and nature. She expressed sadness and anger over the death of her father and the separation of from mother. She was both angry and fearful of the militants. She exhibited grief and depression over her father's death. Raheema has very severe problems.

### B

As the months passed, she became less silent, and behaved better with less shyness. She got along with most of the children and animators of both ethnic groups. Earlier she lacked self confidence; now she is trying to come forward for everything. She attends the Garden every week. Earlier she didn't go to many of the activities, now she is good at art and handicraft.

In the school visit, the teacher described Raheema as kind to other children, co-operative and befriending of them. She behaves with elders sweetly without hesitation. There has been considerable change in her art, handicrafts like stitching, and her studies.

The home visit was to meet the grandmother. Raheema lives with her two sisters and maternal grand mother. Her mother has gone to Middle East. According to eyewitnesses, Raheema's father was cut by militants and put on fire when he was on his way to the field outside town; grandmother cried telling the story. Raheema was very sad over the loss of her father. When she saw someone wearing a nice dress Raheema cried to her grandmother, "I, too, would have such dresses had my father been alive. I don't have Father!". Unable to bear her crying, the grandmother borrowed money from somebody and to buy her clothes. Raheema is greatly fond of visiting the Butterfly Garden. She anxiously awaits the Saturdays, all ready before it is even dawn. At the garden she would

play co-operatively with other children. Now she is well advanced. She can do handicrafts without anybody's aid. After coming to the Garden, she is more advanced in education, art and responsibility.

**C**

In the follow-up session there was not much change discussing her family: the salient factors are her father's death, and separation from mother. She appeared to have a stronger sense of self. In the Garden she had begun to take some initiative and handle day to day responsibilities better. Raheema has a better sense of others, and has learnt to live with differences and accept others.

**14. Rifaya**

**A**

Rifaya is a 10 years old Muslim girl. Her teacher has known her for two years; her father was shot dead by Tamil militants in 1990. She longs for her father; if other children come to school with their fathers, she stares sadly at them. So she was referred to the Butterfly Garden.

Rifaya was referred to the Cuckoo's Nest by the woman animator who established a bond with her travelling on the Butterfly Bus and providing childcare in the Garden. Rifaya lives with her mother and grandmother. She plays with her friends in fantasies, but her contact with others is limited. She often complains of headache and giddiness, telling her how she almost fainted at school; she does not eat anything willingly. She does not sing during the bus journey, unlike the rest; she doesn't talk to others, only sits on her own. So she was referred for the Amma Appa session.

**B**

In the genogram session, Rifaya's most severe traumatization is the death of the father by the militants. The event has affected her psyche, both her feelings and imagination. She is having bad nightmares, the militants coming to kill her, and of ugly beasts and birds. Rifaya is afraid even of Allah. She imagines Allah is a taskmaster trying to punish her. The death of her father and grandparents are negatively affected Rifaya. Furthermore a drunken neighbour constantly intimidates her. She doesn't like to play, but loves to be alone with a book. She is constantly seeking guidance in order to always do the right thing. During the session she expressed sadness and grief over the death of her father, anger with the militant group and fear of bad dreams thinking of her father. She felt the session was very helpful; she loved playing the genogram. She participated in the meditation fully and worked with the guide to overcome fears.

In the Garden, she began to engage in all the activities. She talks and plays with many of the children in both ethnic groups, and animators too. She started coming forward for everything. In the home visit she lives with her mother and maternal grandmother. Rifaya's uncle looks after them, sending them money from the Middle East which they use to get by. Rifaya's father was shot dead at home by the militants. Mother saw it happen. She said she was aimed at, but the shot missed and hit her husband. Rifaya was two years old at the time. Now if she sees children with their fathers, she comes to her and says if my father had been alive I would also be with him. Having no father is a big worry to Rifaya. They described that Rifaya had advanced somewhat after her coming to the Garden. She has often invited Mother to come and see the Garden. After coming home, Rifaya is often very tired; sometimes she sleeps the whole rest of the day. Because of this weariness mother is reluctant to send Rifaya to the garden. Rifaya is very fond of her mother. At school, after attending the Butterfly Garden, she co-operates with the children in group activities. She seems to be happy. There is improvement in art, handicraft, needlework and story telling. There is good advancement in responsibility.

**C**

The follow-up session took place after the program ended. Rifaya is 11 years old. She is the only girl in the family. When she was 2 years old her father was killed in the ethnic conflict. Now she lives with her mother, grandmother and one of the uncles. The uncle and the other uncles support her with food, educational facilities and clothes. She is well taken care of, though she lost her father through the violent. She is a very affectionate kid. In the Garden she likes most her relationship with the animators and her many friends, playing, and expressing feelings through activities, and getting away from home and school. Now that she is no longer in the program she feels unhappy. But she has also learnt to deal with separations well. She has learnt to appreciate people and to reach out to them. Her experience in the Butterfly Garden is a big factor in her improvement.



## **15. Naleera**

### **A**

Naleera is a years old Muslim girl from. Her teacher has known her from her childhood. Her mother has been a mental patient since young age. She committed suicide setting fire to herself. This girl has no one but her father for her maintenance, so her teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden. In the Garden she related only with a few animators and a select few of her own ethnic group. Mostly she was in a worrying mood and absent-minded in activities. She was invited to the Cuckoo's Nest.

In the Amma Appa game she spoke about her mother who was a mental patient and committed suicide by setting herself on fire. Naleera saw the burnt body in the hospital. The father is depressed and gave up his work. She lives with her aunt who is extremely nice to her. Uncle is the bread winner for Naleera and her father, including her two sisters. Naleera is a lonely child and relates to children only in her own extended family, feeling closeness to a two year old child of her aunt and a 7 year old cousin. She has moderate relationship with sisters. Another death in the family disturbs her. An uncle was shot dead by the armed forces. She misses him very much. Naleera is depressed and lonely. She loves to spend time story telling. She longs to be a seamstress. During the session she expressed sadness over the death of the mother and her poverty. She has fears with the memory of her mother's burnt body and Uncle's death. She was deeply affect by her grief and trauma.

She is an emotionally disturbed, highly disoriented child. The child was not clear about time, space and persons. She constantly seeks support from children who will not hurt her but will support her in her pain. She was very happy to speak about her hidden pain. For her the session was very fruitful. She was very grateful and prayerful invoking blessings on her household members who are her emotional support. She remembered her mother and asked Allah to take her into paradise for life with Him.

### **B**

In the early stages of coming to the Garden she was a lonely child. In the months that followed there was great improvement in making relationships, not just with her own ethnic group but to other children and animators. She took part in many activities and her self confidence grew. She looked after her appearance better. She came to the Garden regularly. She shared her experiences with animators and was making good effort to reduce her sad moods.

Visiting her home, their simple house is in a lane in town close to her school. Her father looks after the family tending a small vegetable shop in the market. Her eldest sister is 14, the next sister is 12. Father and the eldest daughter make the cooking.

Naleera's mother was insane. She ended up sprinkling kerosene on herself and set fire in 1997. Before this she used to go to school and collect her children saying militants would come and do harm. Due to this trouble her husband would tie her to a post at home with a chain. She had fears from past problems years ago but things got worse. Due to the mother's condition the children are badly affected. Neither grandparents are alive, there's noone except himself to look after these children. So they lack cleanliness. He is busy with his small business, so he cannot look after the children well. His relatives live far away who are not in a position to lend a helping hand. The elder sister helps father to look after the family.

At school, since coming to the Garden, she has become active and can attend to herself, no longer hesitant and silent. She is now capable of plaiting her own hair. She shines in educational activities like art. Self confidence has developed a little. She comes forward to relate with grown-ups better.

### **C**

Naleera wasn't available to have a follow-up session.

## **16. Nazeera**

### **A**

Nazeera is a 13 year old girl from a Muslim village. She was forsaken by father as well as mother. Both of them re-married and they no longer look after her. She is brought up by her maternal grandmother, and treated as an unwanted child by the parents and grandmother. All this lack of recognition in her family has affected her badly. She has poor growth mentally and physically. Her teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden to help overcome her difficult situation.

In the Butterfly Garden she doesn't like to sing, but listens to storytelling and is fond of taking roles in plays. She mixes with the children and plays but frequently becomes angry, pinching and hitting others. She

relates to and plays only with those she likes. She talked to a woman animator all about the problems in her mind. When she talks about her problems her eyes well up, and she complains of a headache. Sometimes she is happy; at other times she is the embodiment of sorrow. She was invited to play the Amma Appa Game.

In the Amma Appa session, it was clear that Nazeera is a very lonely child who has not received nurturance from either father or mother. The mother is a promiscuous woman who has lived with four husbands. Because of this behaviour her father has deserted her and re married. So Nazeera is separated from both mother and father and lives with her maternal grandmother, uncles and aunt. The child feels intensely neglected and depressed. "I don't know why I was born into this world. I wish I were dead". She is very confused, very resentful of the father, and hates her mother. Nazeera longs to live with Father but he has distanced himself from Nazeera; occasionally he verbally expresses some love and acceptance. Nazeera feels that her mother hates her and she physically abused her, so she avoids her. Her breadwinner is her uncle. Her emotional support is her maternal grandmother who also serves the role of her advisor.

Nazeera longs to come into the garden for it is here that she feels at home and accepted. She feels she will be depressed once she can no longer come to the garden. There are moments of deep loneliness in her life. She loves to sit on the bank of the river to watch the water flow. She loves nature and she gets a lot out of looking at birds, trees and animals. She would love to become a teacher or get a good job to be able to take care of herself. Her closing ritual was for her paternal grandfather, for unity in the family and for peace. She wept when spoke about her separation. In the session, the guide felt very intimate with her, she too, felt she was deeply understood. She responded to the closing meditation positively and meaningfully.

## **B**

In the beginning of coming to the Garden, she took part in a limited number of activities; now she participates in everything. After she attained puberty her grandmother told her not to go to the Garden, but she comes regularly, every week: "I can't stay at home without coming to the Garden". She seems to be happy and relates to both Muslim and Tamil children. She always sings songs riding on the Butterfly Bus. She enjoys the garden very much.

A visit was made to her home. She lives with her maternal grandmother, maternal aunt and uncle, who is a shop merchant, and supports them. Grandmother does not want to keep her in her house. "You go to your father" she often says, "I have too many difficulties because of your presence"; Nazeera bears all this and continues to live there with her. Nazeera's mother lives nearby but gave Nazeera daily troubles. Mother separated and married another person, so Nazeera no longer goes to her mother's home. Her paternal grandmother, uncles and aunts live near her, but she don't help her. Grandmother says that Nazeera feels sorry when she thinks about all this. Whenever she sees the neighbouring families helping the children, she watches it and tells grandmother about it with pain. She cries and complains no one in her extended family helps her. She is very much affected.

The family spoke about how fond Nazeera is of visiting the Butterfly Garden.. She anxiously waits for Sundays to come. Despite grandmother and aunty preventing her, she disappears and goes to the Garden anyway. Generally speaking, she is very fond of the Garden. "In the beginning, we had fear about the Garden and her participation. We feared because we thought they would convert her religion. But her teachers reassured us saying no such thing would happen there. Now we don't have such fears. We feel pleasure that she plays with the children of other religions.

In the school visit, we learned that, after coming to the Butterfly Garden she related with children as usual, but is more co-operative than before in group activities. There has been progress in her education. She is good at handicraft, needle work and art.

## **C**

In the follow-up Amma Appa session, Nazeera reviewed her family situation. She is now 14 years old. There has three siblings, a 23 year old sister and a two year old by her mother after she separated from her father. Now she is separated from this next husband and has gone to the Middle East for work; the two year old sister lives with her and the grandmother. Grandmother is her emotional support, breadwinner, guide and close friend of Nazeera. She has no connections with her father's relatives, but has connections with her mother's although she also has emotional problems with them. She is intimidated by her uncle and in constant conflict with two of her aunts. Two of her uncles were killed by the army in the ethnic conflict. She has a girlfriend with whom she has strong emotional connections. Her father's separation from her has made Nazeera emotionally disturbed. She longs for the father but is constantly rejected. He not only refused to help her but rejects her and tells her not to step into his house. She spoke about her fears of the future "What will happen when grandmother dies, how will her uncles and aunt treat her then?" These are fears she carries within herself with sadness. Nevertheless, she has happiness within her. If Nazeera could remain continuously connected with the Garden it would be a tremendous healing experience for her.

## 17. Safeeka

### A

Safeeka is a 12 year old Muslim girl from a village who was referred by her teacher because she keeps to herself, but has been the cause of disturbances for other children. It is known that her family has been affected by the conflict. In the Butterfly Garden, she participated in few activities and would associate only with Muslim children and selected animators. When she saw another girl play the genogram game, she became intensely interested and insisted that she also be given the opportunity. So this was arranged.

In 1990 when she was quite young her father was suspected to be an extremist; the army arrested and killed him. During the troubled years that followed her family took refuge in a Muslim town nearby to live with relatives. Safeeka did not attend school during that period; she now studies in a class lower to her age. Since then her mother has been working in the Middle East to earn a living for the family. With money sent from overseas they put up a small house where she now lives with her two older sisters, ages 20 and 18, and her maternal grandmother. Safeeka is fond of the middle sister but she has many petty quarrels with the eldest.

During the session she expressed sadness over her father's death, depression over her mother's separation by distance and the impoverishment of her family. She tends to worry over these realities but tries to hide it. She resents the army for the great damage to their family. In the session she avoided eye contact with the guide, looking instead to the female research assistant for confirmation.

### B

In the Garden, she is seldom alone, definitely preferring to be in a group. Her interest in dance is high and she likes to take part in role plays and games. Visit to the Butterfly Garden is a happy event for her. According to her schoolteacher, after coming to the Butterfly Garden, Safeeka relates to people better and without shyness. She works collectively and actively in group activities. Her leadership skills have developed; she now volunteers in the school assembly, religious activities and drama. Her studies are going well.

When a home visit was made, it was learned that she and her elder sisters live on their own. Grandmother used to live there, but now she lives with her son. An uncle lives within hailing distance and he comes to their help when called. Her sisters weave mats, which they sell to vendors who come by the house. They go out only when necessary; otherwise their home is their world. Uncle looks after them from the neighbouring house. It was learned that Safeeka's father was 28 when he was shot dead by the army in 1990. They had adopted a boy but he died of illness when he was one year old. Safeeka's mother left for Middle-East when Safeeka was only 40 days old leaving her with grandmother. She has been working in the Middle East for fourteen years now, and was there when Safeeka's father was killed. By her work they have bought a piece of land; the house they live in is still in a state of construction. Safeeka's father has 3 sisters, two married with children and one working in the Middle East. Safeeka's mother has five siblings, three of whom have gone to the Middle East for work. None of the aunts or uncles give them any help or visit. One of the aunts sent word recently that Safeeka's mother is working with illness.

Safeeka is fond of visiting Butterfly Garden. She wakes early at dawn on the day she goes to the Garden. As soon as she returned from the Garden she goes to bed, refusing to eat. She doesn't tell anyone at home about the garden. They do not ask; they only see the artwork she brings home. Uncle scolds her for not eating meals and tells her not to go to the garden, but she does not heed and attends the garden regularly.

### C

The follow-up AAG session took place at the end of the Butterfly Garden program. Her sense of self has developed but she continues to feel her inadequacies and shortcomings and she is developing negative self-image. Safeeka is physically mature; she is aware of her physical changes, but her shyness prevents her from relating to males healthily. She desperately reaches out to the opposite sex, but sometimes her approaches are not appreciated. The garden has helped her to become aware of her life problems, but there is some denial about her problems being sexually mature, physically big, dark-skinned, with no male role models for relationship, as well as the separation from her mother. Safeeka has psychological conflicts. She needs to work out these conflicts in follow up programs. The garden has helped her to create the space for more growth full experiences. If not for the garden she could be a very disturbed child. Nevertheless, she has a natural resiliency. She has the capacity to laugh healthily. Playing with other friends and she enjoys doing handicraft immensely. Her attitude towards living with differences has developed well: male, female, Muslim, Tamil, Islam, Hindu, Christian differences are better integrated into her life experiences.

## **18. Nazeer**

### **A**

Nazeer is a 16-year-old Muslim boy from a village. His schoolteacher noted his pensive mood, aloneness and poor development for his age, for which he was referred to the Butterfly Garden. There he seemed worried with a constant sad expression and was inattentive during activities. For these reasons he was invited to the Cuckoo's Nest for some individual attention.

In the course of the session, Nazeer explained that he lost two years of schooling from a nasty accident falling from a tree, breaking his arm for which he stayed at home for a long period. He is now in the 9th grade, but is much older than his classmates and is quite unenthusiastic about school. He lacks motivation and feels out of place in his peer group of younger boys. His father died when he was eight from some illness and has not had a replacement father figure. He is not close to his mother, who has had to work in the Middle East as a housemaid. Nazeer now lives with his paternal uncle and his four children. Consequently he is also separated from his only brother, who also works in the Middle East. Uncle is the economic and emotional support for him. Nazeer has a confidant his own age outside the family with whom he shares his secrets. His grandfather was stabbed to death. This traumatized Nazeer a lot and comes back to him in frightening dreams. His paternal grandmother is alive but lives alone. One of his uncles is an alcoholic who intimidates him constantly. He has a competitive rival outside the family who is constantly a source of annoyance for him.

Nazeer appears sad, frightened, lonely and depressed and which often overcomes him. During the session he participated in a meditative ritual to dispel his fear and sadness: grandfather's murder; father's death; separation from mother and brother; fear of his drunken uncle; his rival friend; his fall from the tree; and a cousin who is a policeman somewhere else in the war zone were all brought to consciousness. Through meditation and self-awareness, he was guided to let go of the negative energy and relax. As he was accompanied through this, he felt very much relieved and peaceful. This was a healing experience for him. The Amma Appa session laying out his life story was a revelation to him.

### **B**

During the visit to his home at his uncle's, contact was made with family members. His father's death occurred during the time of violence and for a while, he and his family lived with another relative. But they were very poor and no one was able to support them so his mother had to leave to work overseas, leaving the children with her husband's relatives. She sends money for their maintenance. His brother, 22, also left to work overseas and now only Nazeer lives with his uncle's family who are kindly and look after him. According to the family, Nazeer is a quiet boy; he is very fond of visiting the Butterfly Garden.

In the school visit, his teacher remarked that Nazeer shows more pleasure and engages with classmates more since coming to the Butterfly Garden. He works co-operatively with other children more than before and his sense of responsibility has increased. He takes part in dramas and his artwork has improved.

During his time at the Butterfly Garden, his acquaintance with fellow children increased, and he related better to animators and children from other ethnic groups. His participation in all activities increased and his self-confidence strengthened, as seen in his story-telling.

### **C**

The follow-up Amma Appa session took place after the nine month program finished. Coming to the Garden was an unforgettable experience for him; he would like very much to be able to come back. In the session he recounted the deaths and separations that have affected his life so much. On this occasion however, he denied he was sad or lonely- something he acknowledged in the first session. This may be because he can no longer come and feels neglected. He asserted that he was very happy and did not feel sadness from his separations. It was felt that the Butterfly Garden was an excellent path towards reaching into his inner world. More accompaniment with him would help heal his emotional rigidity. More time would have been very helpful for him. Here he is open to the approach, but the time constraints of the program hindered deepening the emotional experiences of art work and heart work. He continues to live in denial of his feelings and remains lonely.

## **19. Marliya**

### **A**

Marliya is a 9 year old Muslim child from a village. Her teacher has known her for 5 years and referred her to the Butterfly Garden. She is a shy and hesitating child, often seen in a sad mood. Her family has displaced by the conflict.

When she came to the Butterfly Garden, she did not talk with other children. She sits quietly; if somebody talks to her she smiles but seldom replies. If invited to come and play she might comply, but she prefers to sit and watch silently. Nevertheless she was enthusiastic about coming to the Garden. She works quietly but with fear she may not do as well as others. She mostly attended only the activities of the Muslim woman animator. If someone asks a question she addresses her answer only to her favorite animator. She discloses very little about herself before other children, as if there is some fear. So she was invited to the Amma Appa Game.

Marliya lives with her family in the Muslim village. Father works in a bicycle repair shop, Mother does stitching at home. She has a six year old sister. Marliya was three years old when her family fled to the village from their native place due to ethnic trouble. Her father's families live there still, his two sisters, married and with children, but one couple works overseas with grandparents looking after the children. Marliya likes her father's side of the family and visits during holidays. Marliya's maternal grandparents live in a Muslim town nearby with two of her uncles. Marliya does not like to visit them, because they scold and hit her; the grandparents disapproved of her parents' marriage. Another uncle, a shop employee, married with one child, lives closer by. She is very afraid of him because he often hits her and dislikes her. One maternal aunt is married and living in town with her two children; Marliya does not like to go there, because they also hit her and give her trouble. There is another maternal aunt, married and living in a nearby village, who she does like to visit. Marliya has more liking for her father. Her love for father is greater than for anyone else.

She does not play with her relations but with the school friends. Marliya's happiest event is visiting Butterfly Garden. She denies she has had any miserable life events. She is soft natured and very timid. She seems to have some internal worries, but she reveals nothing.

## **B**

As her time at the Butterfly Garden passed, she began to relate more to all the animators and children of both ethnic groups. She joins in activities, and likes to take part in role-play. At the closing circles, she stands before the rest of the children to sing songs and tell stories. She came to the Garden regularly, until the end of her program.

A visit to her home in Karbala was arranged. House is not their own; there are few belongings and the hygiene is poor. Marliya's father presently works at a mill for Rs.150 (\$2 US) a day, and noone is there to lend a helping hand at home.

Her mother says Marliya is fond of attending the Butterfly Garden; she has no greater happiness than attending the Butterfly Garden. She tells her, "the brothers (animators) working in the garden are good; they like me. They give us gram and short eats (snack food)" She makes special mention of the two women animators she has befriended. She often tells her mother and siblings about the stories she learns at the Garden. Before attending the Garden her daughter had little association and co-operation with other children; there has been a great change in this respect. About the ethnic mingling at the Garden, her mother said: "Children are all alike. Tamil children are also like our children. Mankind is one. Only religion is different. There must be unity among Tamils and Muslims. We can have trade and work only if there is union. If not, life is difficult."

In visiting the school, the teacher remarked there has been much improvement since attending the Butterfly Garden. She has now keen to play collectively with other children. Before, she didn't complete any work. Now, she has developed in handicrafts, art, stitching, and story telling. She acts out short plays, repeating her drama from the Garden at school. She is attending school regularly. Before, she was hesitant to talk or relate to elders; this also has changed for the better.

## **C**

The follow-up Amma Appa Game was conducted after the program cycle had ended. She recounted her family situation as before. Both her father and mother work to maintain the family, which has been displaced at least four times; their present house is not their own. Environmental instability has affected her emotionally and she is very insecure and alienated from herself and others. She lost her grandfathers. She remembers her paternal uncles being killed by militants. She has no connections with maternal uncles and aunts. Some of her cousins are her emotional supports as well as a girlfriend of hers, but Father is her key emotional support and guide for her. There have also been occasions when father has physically abused her. Something prevents her accepting her family household. She shies away from introducing her mother, sisters and brothers to others. When asked about her worst experience this time, Marliya recounted a violent dog attacking her; she was frightened and later got sick. At times she has violent dreams about this experience.

Marliya is afraid to be alone. Her saddest experience is stopping coming to the garden when her program cycle ended. Her happiest experience has been coming to Butterfly Garden. She had had an

enjoyable experience as her inner creativity of the child emerged and blossomed. She has learnt to accept herself more and speaks of being good in her studies, there is more confidence than before. Marliya is another example where a healing experience was initiated in the garden, but when her attendance was abruptly terminated at the end of the program cycle, the child has been left frustrated, depressed and disappointed- this dilemma requires more reflection.

## **20. Manisha**

### **A**

Manisha is a 9 years old Muslim girl from avillage. Her teacher has known her for 5 years and that her family has displaced by the violence. She is a shy, hesitating child, often seen in a pensive mood, so the teacher referred her to the Butterfly Garden.

In the Garden she was active but at times her mood changed quickly and she would lose her temper. At other times she sits quietly and sadly in a corner. She was invited for the Amma Appa Game.

Manisha was born in Jaffna where she lived with her family. When troubles came, she was in the jungle as a displaced person she saw many elephants that frightened her. They ended up going to India as refugees. After living in India for some time they came to a Muslim town in Batticaloa district and then settled in their present village. Manisha's father works in a shop. When he's angry, he thrashes her severely, so she fear him. When asked whom she prefers in her family members, she replied mother and father; she does not like her brother with whom she frequently quarrels. Manisha likes playing with her girlfriend Safeeka most, her classmate who is also at the Butterfly Garden.

Manisha has 3 paternal aunts and 4 paternal uncles. She is fond of one paternal uncle with three children who she likes to visit. On her mother's side she has two uncles and four aunts, one of whom she is fond. Manisha's paternal grandmother lives in Jaffna, but grandfather lives in the Muslim town they came to in Batticaloa - he is blind. She doesn't recall her maternal grandmother who is dead, but her other grandfather lives in the same town as well. Both grandfathers, due to dire poverty and lack of support from children go begging- this is a deep concern and sadness for her, especially for her paternal grandpa, blind and separated from grandmother; this hurts her very much. She is a very pleasant girl with much exposure to conflict and trauma in her early childhood experiences, but she appears to have outgrown her traumatic experiences. It was very revealing to learn about her refugee experience and displacement out of Sri Lanka. Living in India as a refugee must have been very traumatic for the whole family. Being displaced within the country without employment and experiencing poverty has also affected the personality of the child. She is a gifted child but with few opportunities. She is doing well in her studies. She has good attachment friendship. Family remains an area of emotional block for her with fears of her father, though he is separated from her by his work. The large extended family plays an important role in her life.

### **B**

At the beginning of attending the Garden, she was quite moody and lost her temper easily, sometimes sitting by herself away from others. Now she makes good effort to be happy, and not let sadness come in the way. She relates to other children well, especially Tamil children. She volunteers and joins in everything; before, she didn't have the self-confidence. She prefers drama more than other activities; she trains other the children herself without the animators' help. She openly shares her experiences with the animators and is clearly fond of attending the Garden.

A visit was made to Manisha's home in the village. They were displaced from Jaffna due to violence. Their family converted from Hinduism to the Muslim faith. They fled from Jaffna to India in 1991 where they were refugees for five years, before coming back to Trincomalee, then Vavuniya, now to the village where they have been for the last three years. Their family is a poor one, living in a previously unoccupied house.

Manisha's mother describes how fond Manisha is of the Butterfly Garden. She talks a lot about the activities going on, the animators and other staff who are all good people to her. She often comes to the garden without taking breakfast, fearing she would miss the bus if she had to wait for breakfast. She has frequent headaches. "She tells the neighbourhood children all about the garden and shows the things she makes. There is good development in her studies and extra mural activities; this gives us pleasure. At the start she was timid. Now she relates with elders without reluctant. So we wish we could send her to the Butterfly Garden continuously." About ethnic reconciliation, her mother said, "Peace and communal reconciliation is very important. We can't live in peace and harmony without unity among the ethnic groups. The Butterfly Garden encourages co-operation among the ethnic groups, allowing the different groups to take part together in games and other activities. This will remove the feeling of differences among the ethnic groups and that will lead the harmony and unity. We have to thank the Butterfly Garden for such useful efforts."

According to her teacher, after attending the Butterfly Garden there has been much improvement in her. She wishes to play collectively. Initially, she didn't do any work completely; now she takes responsibility and completes the work. Development is seen in handicraft, art, stitching, story telling and drama. Now she is capable of arranging and acting short plays. She also trains other children. She repeats her drama at the Garden at school. She is attending school regularly now. Now she talks to elders without any reluctance.

C

In the follow-up Amma Appa session, she described her family situation as a 10 years old girl with a 12 year old brother and an 8 year old sister. Her father and mother are living and her household members include father, mother, three children and her aunt. She is emotionally connected with her blind grandfather who she loves very much. She has no support from other uncles and aunts. Her guide is her mother. Both her parents are working to maintain the family. She is afraid of the father who at times physically abuses her. Her emotional support, her grandfather has separated from the family and lives in a mosque. Manisha has contact with him.

Manisha's two traumatizing experiences are her changing from being a Hindu to a Muslim. This makes her very uneasy about her identity and gives her a distorted self-image. Secondly, she is a displaced refugee child. She has lived in Jaffna, India, and Batticaloa. Her moving from place to place has made her insecure and diffident. She is a depressed and lonely child. I asked her what she does when she is sad she says "I go to see my friend Majuma, who she met in the Garden. She doesn't like certain teachers who punish her because she is slow at learning. In the garden she is very creative, but in the school she is inhibited by her fear. She has bad dreams at night about the jungle and wild animals, and carries these fears with her. She is very happy in the Garden, which offers her a place to heal her wounds. Here the environment is healthy and safe. There is nurturance, support and love through the animator and opportunity for creativity. There are relationships for sharing. Her saddest moments are her experiences of rejections, her happiest, those of acceptance.

Manisha is going to have difficulties after her Garden experience. There are plans to move out to Jaffna. This is going to make her more depressed. My hope is that the Butterfly Garden healing experience will have taught her to engage in activities that satisfy her and to choose friends with whom to share goodness with each other.