INTER-SCHOOL CROSS-CULTURAL PROGRAMME
SURVEY OF SRI LANKAN STUDENTS

JULY 2016

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Section 1: Executive Summary

In 2016, the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) organized several inter-school cross-cultural programs at the regional level. Programming around festivals for Thai Pongal in January and New Year celebrations in April, the effort hopes to increase inter-ethnic/religious dialogue, understanding and trust among students and the overall community to ultimately improve ethnic/religious relations in the country and promote national reconciliation.

The aim of this survey of Sri Lankan students¹ is to measure efforts by ONUR to enhance inter-ethnic/religious relations among students through cross-cultural programming. To this end, the research seeks to:

- Evaluate ONUR cross-cultural festival programming;
- Measure the program’s impact on inter-ethnic and religious interactions, comfort, and knowledge among students;
- Identify effective ways to increase inter-cultural awareness, learning, understanding, respect and trust.

The key findings from the 2016 Unity Survey of Sri Lankan students are:

1. Participant assessment of the ONUR learning days is extremely positive and students support more similar programming, possibly on an island-wide scale. They strongly believe – across all ethnic-religious lines – that events like these are important for students and for the country because they offer a chance to increase their knowledge of other cultures, collaborate and potentially make new friends. Girls give the program higher ratings than boys do, while Sinhalese participants are less enthusiastic than Sri Lankan Tamil students and students of other ethnic-religious backgrounds. Students also offer thoughtful areas for improvement of the events, including increasing participation of all ethnic groups and representing all cultures, establishing tri-lingual announcements, giving students more responsibility and opportunity for feedback, designing more creative activities that encourage cultural mixing and participation by school prefects, teachers, parents and community leaders, and ensuring adequate hospitality (food, water, shelter, facilities) for participants.

2. The program has contributed to enhancing cross-cultural interaction and understanding. Participants in ONUR school-based cultural programs demonstrate more understanding and trust than students who have not participated.² They are also more comfortable interacting with students of different cultures, have more cross-cultural opportunities and believe that those interactions will help them in their lives. Participants are more likely to support integrated schools as a path to improving ethnic-religious relations and believe that cross-cultural interaction will reduce ethnic disputes in Sri Lanka. In general, girls, minority students and those with ethnically mixed peer groups value cross-cultural interaction more than boys, majority students or those with homogeneous peer groups.

¹The survey, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR), was administered by TNS, was conducted between 14-16 June, 2016. It consisted of a total sample of 605 respondents, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 4%. Half of the respondents participated in the ONUR cross-cultural programming and half who did not participate. Students were age 10-19, in grades 6-13, and equally proportioned among the Western, Central, Southern and Northern Provinces. School locations were randomly selected and data collection was self-reported by students using pen and paper. A full methodological report can be found in Appendix I.

²Selection of students for participation in the programs was not randomized (students were self-selected, or chosen by teachers/administration), meaning selection bias is possible in the participant group.
3. Sri Lankan students are socially divided along ethnic-religious lines, but less so than adults. School and sports offer youth more regular opportunities to interact cross-culturally than most adults have. After sports, the festival Learning Days students attended represents the best opportunity for cross-cultural collaboration.

4. Barriers to cross-cultural student interaction are chiefly language differences and discomfort due to lack of knowledge and opportunity for collaboration. Some students also get pressure from family and religious leaders to avoid inter-ethnic/religious contact. Despite the barriers, students rate their cross-cultural comfort, understanding and trust much higher than adults, demonstrating the importance of these types of programs that target youth and hopefully extend those feelings to more students. Across cultural lines, students strongly support inter-ethnic/religious interaction, including learning both Sinhala and Tamil in school and integrating schools. They believe that increased interaction will help them in their lives and reduce disputes in the country.

Recommendations:

- There is a powerful need to foster more cross-cultural connection in Sri Lanka. This effort should be on-going, intentional and institutionalized, not ad-hoc events. The youth population is both the easiest and most obvious place to focus this endeavor. Students strongly support programming that increases knowledge of and interaction with peers of different ethnic and religious groups.

- Students want and need more opportunities to interact, learn from each other and potentially form life-long friendships. ONUR-sponsored learning days are an excellent way to foster these opportunities and could potentially provide the foundation to build even more substantive long-term programming.

- To enhance future ONUR efforts, consistent evaluation and feedback mechanisms for student participants, school administrators and other stakeholders should be developed. Demographic analysis of participation will help future planning of learning days and inform potential longer-term efforts such as sports leagues, academic teams, fine/performing arts programs or coordinated volunteer efforts. Creative use of mobile phones for outreach, education and follow-up should be considered.

- Sri Lankan youth support efforts to teach both Sinhala and Tamil in schools and remove other barriers to cross-cultural understanding, respect and trust – including their own fear, lack of knowledge and comfort, and a dearth of opportunities to collaborate. They believe this is critical for the future of the country. The levels of student support for these programming goals provide solid evidence for efficacy and potential future success.

- Choice of participants for future events should take care to include a cross-section of students (or all students) from any given school to avoid selection bias. A special effort should be made to enhance opportunities for more Sinhala students to interact with minority cultures, because the data illustrates how majority students are more likely to have homogenous peer groups, and as a result, have less knowledge, understanding and trust of those outside the group.
Section 2: Assessment of the ONUR Inter-school Cultural Programme

Very Positive Impressions of ONUR Inter-school Cultural Events

Students have very positive impressions of the inter-school festival celebration programs they attended this year. More than nine of ten participants (94%) in the Avurudu event rated it very good (17%) or excellent (77%). Almost eight of ten participants (78%) in the Thai Pongal event rated it excellent (51%) or very good (26%).

Almost all participants surveyed agreed they would like to attend a similar event in the future (88% strongly agreed). Students nearly unanimously characterize the event as “enjoyable overall” and eight of ten (81%) strongly agree. More than nine in ten students (93%) felt event leaders were knowledgeable, including 71 percent who strongly agreed.

In general, girls give the program higher ratings than boys do, and Sinhalese participants are less enthusiastic than Sri Lankan Tamil students and students of other ethnic-religious backgrounds.
Participation in religious holiday celebrations or learning days like the ONUR sponsored programs are the most common inter-school activities after inter-school sports. Performing arts such as music and drama, and knowledge competitions like debate, robotics and chess are also popular. Less than one in five students does not participate in any inter-school activities.

Many Sri Lankan students surveyed took part in multiple festival celebration Learning Days. Of those who participated, almost eight in ten (77%) took part in a program for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year holidays (Avurudu), while half (50%) recall participating in a learning day for the Thai Pongal festival and 30 percent took part in a Vesak festival program. About 36 percent took part in other holiday celebrations.

Of those students who participated in an inter-school learning day, six in ten (61%) attended an event at their own school, while 28 percent traveled to another school and 10 percent did both. Those who traveled to another school for an event in the last six months were more likely to be Sinhalese, live in the North or Central Provinces, and age 14 or older.

Participants believe strongly that inter-school cultural programs are important for both the country and students like them. Nine out of ten students (90%) strongly agree – across gender and ethnic lines – that these types of events are important for the country and eight out of ten (79 percent) strongly agree that these events are important for students. Seven out of ten (69%) strongly agree that the event increased their knowledge of a culture/religion other than their own. These events also gave students a chance to talk to students of cultures different from their own (58% strongly agree), interact with students during activities (57% strongly agree), and make new friends (53% strongly agree).
Students identified some areas for improvement at future inter-school cultural programs. While nine of ten students (91%) agreed that the event increased their comfort with another culture or religion, only 47 percent strongly agreed, which is low compared to other measures. Students would benefit from more explanation for the topics covered, possibly more challenging material or more peer interaction. Almost all participants (96%) feel more information prior to the event would have been helpful (61% strongly agreed). Similarly, while 86 percent felt they did learn directly from peers, only 38 percent strongly agreed. Nine of ten participants (91%) admitted they mostly hung out with their usual school friends during the event, rather than interacting with students from other schools. Two-thirds (66%) strongly agreed.

Six in ten participants (63%) had no trouble understanding what was happening during the event, although 37 percent confessed they did have some trouble comprehending the program (7 percent strongly agreed). Slightly over half of participants (55%) felt the event was too long, including about a quarter (23%) who strongly agreed. Students were split on event feedback: half (51%) felt they did have a chance to give feedback (21% strongly), while the other half (49%) felt they did not have the opportunity to debrief (30% strongly).
Much of the feedback students volunteered when surveyed is supportive of ONUR cross-cultural programming efforts. Participants asserted that “all national and religious festivals should be celebrated collaboratively,” and that “more programs should be organized every year.” Students felt the events “helped increase our knowledge and experiences,” and “provided opportunity to collaborate with peers in other ethnic groups, religions and schools.” Some suggested organizing other conferences to increase knowledge about traditions and culture of other religions and ethnic groups – perhaps not just around festivals, but for general interest, knowledge and interaction. Just one percent (1%) of participants volunteered overall negative feedback about the events, describing the programming as “not relevant.”

Significant program changes suggested by participants included:

- Provide more games representing all cultures/or have more programs
- Increase participation of other ethnic groups
- Institute tri-lingual Announcements/Introductions/Objectives of programs
- Address communication issues by having both Sinhalese and Tamil teachers involved
- Provide for food, water, sun shelter, hygienic/common facilities
- Give students more responsibility
- Provide an opportunity to express thoughts and ideas

Other program changes suggested by participants included:

- Design more creative activities
- Run program on time
- Arrange students so that groups are culturally mixed
- Increase number of participants from each school
- Change the host school so more schools participate
- Organize on a wider scale (all-island vs. province level)
- Encourage participation by school prefects, parents, and Sinhala & Tamil leaders
- Pay attention to every student
- Test student knowledge after event
- Give advance notice of program date so students can prepare/practice for games
- Judge games properly
- Offer more games with enough equipment
- Arrange gifts for winners
- Do not schedule other events on the same day

3 Future events should include written student feedback with demographic information; perhaps even a scaled-back version of the survey instrument used in this research, to provide on-going evaluation and planning data for ONUR.
Section 3: Impact of Program on Cross-Cultural Understanding

Cross-cultural Understanding Provides Foundation to Build On

Sri Lankan youth exhibit strong cross-cultural understanding and trust. Nearly nine in ten Sri Lankan students (88 percent) agree that they understand the ways and customs of other ethnic-religious groups. This compares to just 62 percent of Sri Lankan adults. There is still ground to be gained in terms of cross-cultural understanding among students: Only 20 percent of students strongly agree that they understand others’ ways and customs. This is only slightly better than the 16 percent of adults who strongly agreed and will be a key measure to watch for future program evaluation.

Another important measure is trust. Again, 88 percent of students find people of other ethnic-religious groups as trustworthy as those from their own group, including 44 percent who strongly agree. This compares with just 51 percent of adults who find others just as trustworthy and includes just 15 percent who strongly agree.

Older teens have more understanding and are more trusting than younger students, are more comfortable interacting cross-culturally and have more opportunities to do so.

Importantly, Sri Lankan Tamils and other minority students have significantly more understanding, trust, comfort and opportunity to interact that Sinhalese students. Living in a majority culture, minority students also understand how cross-cultural interaction will help in their lives. This speaks to the need for a special focus to give majority students opportunities to interact.

Participants in ONUR school-based cultural programs have more understanding (+13) and trust (+6) than students who have not participated. They are also more comfortable interacting with students of different cultures (+10), have more cross-cultural opportunities (+10) and believe that those interactions will help them in their lives (+10). They are also more likely to agree that integrated schools will improve ethnic-religious relations (+11).
Mixed peer groups have a significant impact on cross-cultural relations. Since students with cross-cultural friend groups show similar – and in some cases even more pronounced – agreement with these statements, it is fair to suggest that more cross-cultural interaction among students will lead to better understanding, increased trust and improved relations.\(^4\)

More than six in ten Sri Lankan students (63\%) have few or no friends outside their ethnic-religious group. While this represents significantly more ethnic interaction than older Sri Lankans (76\% have few or no friends outside their ethnic-religious group\(^5\)), it leaves room for substantial growth.

\(^4\) Future research will need to examine the question of whether participants in cultural programs are more open to cross-cultural interaction to begin with – either thru self-selection, or school administrator selection. A survey question might be added to determine how student was selected for participation and demographic controls will need to be established as well.

\(^5\) Adult data from 2014 National Survey conducted for UNDP.
Not surprisingly, minority students and those students living in more ethnically mixed locations (i.e. Colombo and Kandy) are much more likely to have ethnically mixed peer groups than those living in more homogenous communities (Northern and Southern provinces). Boys (+4), older teens (+12) are more likely to interact across cultural lines.

While adult interactions across cultural lines are more likely to be in public, young people are most likely to interact cross-culturally at school and through sports activities. Multiple responses were allowed to this question, and after school and sports, shopping and festival interactions are common, similar to the adult population.
Students are aware of significant barriers to cross-cultural interaction. Less than three in ten students (28%) strongly agree they have opportunities to interact with people of other religions and cultures. These barriers have created separation that has led to discomfort with interaction. Just 37 percent of students strongly agree they feel comfortable interacting with students from diverse cultures.

Multiple responses were allowed, but almost two-thirds of Sri Lankan youth (64%) believe language differences are a major barrier. Students in the Northern Province are most likely (79%) to feel language is a significant barrier to interaction, along with those who have homogenous friend groups (73%).

Over half of students (54%) feel uncomfortable with cross-cultural interaction, or are afraid they might do or say the wrong thing. Those who are most uncomfortable include Northern Province students (78%), those with homogenous friend groups (61%), girls (62%), older students (58%), and Sri Lankan Tamils (65%).

Nearly four in ten students (38%) blame ignorance for impeding cross-cultural interaction. Youth in the Northern Province (44%) and Western Province (43%) are most likely to admit they do not know much about other cultures or religions. Nearly half of Sri Lankan Tamil students (47%) and four in ten girls (42%) also believe their lack of personal knowledge of other cultures is a barrier to interaction.
One in ten students (10%) lacks the opportunity to interact cross-culturally. This is especially true in the Central Province (16%), among other minority cultures such as Muslims and Indian Tamils (19%), boys (14%) and younger students (14%). Nine percent (9%) of students believe their culture is disrespected, including 13 percent (13%) in the Western Province, 14 percent (14%) of Sri Lankan Tamils and 11 percent (11%) of those under age 14. Six percent (6%) of students have parents, family or religious leaders who discourage cross-cultural interaction, including 16 percent (16%) of other minority cultures, Sri Lankan Tamils and boys (9 percent respectively). Just two percent (2%) of students do not think cross-cultural interaction is that important.

**Students are less certain how cross-cultural interaction affects their lives or reduces disputes in the country.** Only about half of students (53%) strongly agree that cultural interaction will reduce disputes in Sri Lanka. Fewer than half (49%) strongly agree that inter-ethnic/religious interaction will help them in their lives.

Non-participants, students with homogeneous peer groups and boys are least likely to believe that interaction will reduce disputes. These same groups doubt that cross-cultural interaction will help them in their lives.

Among ethnic groups, Sri Lankan Tamils are least likely to believe that interaction will reduce disputes. Sinhalese are least likely to feel cross-cultural connections will help them in their lives.

**This research shows that students strongly support integrated, bi-lingual schools.** Nine of ten students agree (90%, 76% strongly) that both Sinhala and Tamil should be taught in all Sri Lankan schools. Three-quarters (67%) strongly agree that integrated schools will improve ethnic-religious relations and more than half (56%) strongly agree that most people feel free to express their religious opinions.

Girls, program participants, and students with mixed peer groups are most likely to believe that integrated schools will improve ethnic-religious relations and that both Sinhala and Tamil should be taught in all schools.
ONUR Student Programming Advances Cross-Cultural Understanding

- There is a powerful need to foster more cross-cultural connection in Sri Lanka and address barriers that impede interaction. Inter-school cultural programming can directly address some of these barriers and students strongly support this effort for themselves and for the country. This effort should be on-going, intentional and institutionalized, not ad-hoc events. The youth population is both the easiest and most obvious place to focus this endeavor. Students strongly support programming that increases knowledge of and interaction with peers of different ethnic and religious groups.

- Participant assessment of the ONUR learning days is extremely positive. Students want and need more opportunities to interact, learn from each other and potentially form life-long friendships. ONUR should take advantage of Sri Lankan students’ desire to increase their own cross-cultural knowledge and interaction. The student population offers a lower barrier, since youth are already less socially divided and more trusting than adults, and schools also provide a more natural platform. After sports, festival learning days represent an excellent opportunity for cross-cultural collaboration and potentially a foundation for more ambitious programming that could deepen cross-cultural friend groups to enhance levels of understanding and trust. Substantive, on-going programs like cross-cultural sports leagues, academic teams, fine/performing arts programs or coordinated volunteer efforts could be the next step for ONUR.

- To enhance future ONUR efforts, consistent evaluation and feedback mechanisms for student participants, school administrators and other stakeholders should be developed. Students also offer thoughtful areas for improvement of the events, both substantively and logistically. Collecting feedback and data at future events is critical, not only for programming enhancements but also because this information – particularly compared over time – offers continued evidence of the efficacy of cross-cultural youth interaction towards the goal of national reconciliation. Demographic analysis of participation will help future planning of learning days and inform potential longer-term efforts such as sports leagues, academic teams, fine/performing arts programs or coordinated volunteer efforts. Creative use of mobile phones for outreach, education and follow-up should be considered.

- Sri Lankan youth support efforts to teach both Sinhala and Tamil in schools and remove other barriers to cross-cultural understanding, respect and trust – including their own fear, lack of knowledge and comfort, and a dearth of opportunities to collaborate. They believe this is critical for the future of the country. The levels of student support for these programming goals provide solid evidence for efficacy and potential future success.

- Choice of participants for future events should take care to include a cross-section of students (or all students) from any given school to avoid selection bias. A special effort should be made to enhance opportunities for more Sinhala students to interact with minority cultures, because the data illustrates how majority students are more likely to have homogenous peer groups, and as a result, have less knowledge, understanding and trust of those outside the group.
Appendix I: Note on Demographics and Future Research

Caveat on Participant Demographics: Looking at ONUR Program Participants vs. Non-participants

Participants are representative of student population in some ways, but different in other ways. Students who participated in ONUR cross-cultural programming in the last six months are spread across the age/grade spectrum. Over half (54%) are 14-15 years old, while 27 percent are age 13 or younger and 19 percent are age 16 or older. A third (32%) are boys, while 68 percent are girls. The non-participant control group was more likely to be in the 14-15 year-old range and in Grade 9. Seven in ten (71%) are age 14-15 (+17), while 18 percent are age 13 or younger (-9) and only 11 percent are age 16 or older (-8). Six in ten non-participants (60%) are boys and 40 percent are girls.

Participants were more likely than non-participants to have a mobile phone or access to one.

Participants and non-participants are similar in terms of geographical and ethnicity. Non-participants are more likely to be Christian (+16) than participants.

Participants are more likely to have participated in inter-school activities (such as sport, knowledge competitions, or music). A third of non-participants (32%) were not involved in any inter-school activities in the last six months, compared to just two percent (2%) of participants. This might mean that these students self-selected to participate in the cross-cultural events, or that school administrators chose the most active students to attend. Or, this could be affected by the age of the participants vs. non-participants.

Participants are also slightly more likely than non-participants to have cross-cultural friendships. Again, this could be a function of age, or more out-going students self-selecting to participate in the events.

Age:
Gender:

Future research should be designed to control for event participant selection bias. Currently, we do not know if the schools/students selected for participation are more diverse or significantly different from non-participants. Do this year’s participants have more trust and understanding because they were selected or self-selected to participate, and already inclined because they had more cross-cultural connections? Any non-participant control group should be reflective of the larger population of students.6

Religion:

6 For future research: Both participant and non-participant group should be controlled (relatively equal numbers or proportional weighting) for gender, age, ethnicity and religion in addition to geography. Additionally, ethnicity and religion in overall sample should match current census figures and oversamples should be collected if necessary to ensure statistically significant sampling of key minority populations.
Appendix II: Methodology

The survey, was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) and administered by TNS, was conducted between 14-16 June, 2016.

Research Design
The survey was carried out using a fully quantitative research design. As the survey was to assess the impact of the cultural activities that held in schools, two separate target groups were selected.
TG 1 – Students who participated in the cultural activities
TG 2 – Students who did not participate in the cultural activities

Data collection was done using pen and paper method was used for self-filed by students. A TNS supervisor was available at each survey venue to assist the students if they had any clarifications.

Schools to be surveyed for the study were selected randomly based on the following process.
1. A list was prepared for each province with all the school that hosted the events.
2. Based on a random number generation method, one school was selected from each province to represent the area.
3. Using a similar random number generation method, one/two or three participating schools were also selected from each area separately.

Given below is the final list of schools selected for the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Host school</th>
<th>Participated school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>Vidyalankara M.V.-Negombo</td>
<td>St Peter’s College,Negombo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colombo Hindu College, Rathmalana</td>
<td>Kothalavalapura M.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galle</td>
<td>Mpalagama Siriunanda Vidyalaya</td>
<td>Karandeniya Maha Vidyalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sacred Heart Convent-Galle</td>
<td>Alvicious Vidyalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vavuniya</td>
<td>Sivapraksha Balika Vidyalaya</td>
<td>Dogaswatta maha Vidyalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parakum Maha Vidyalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dharmapala Vidyalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuwara Eliya</td>
<td>Nanuoya Nawalar Tamil Vidyalaya</td>
<td>Gamini M.M.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Madduma Bandara Vidyalaya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total sample of 600 respondents was proposed for the survey with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 4%.

The table below depicts the break-down of the sample population based on districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Allocated Sample</th>
<th>Purposive sample distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Non participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 From TNS Methodological Report: Survey to measure the effectiveness of cultural activities in building unity and reconciliation.
Sample achieved
The sample achieved after fieldwork was as below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Allocated Sample</th>
<th>Purposive sample distribution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Non participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fieldwork process
Field work happened from 14th of June to 16th of June 2016. Supervisors and interviewers who were located in the above mentioned provinces and simultaneously they done the survey. Prior to starting actual field work, a pilot survey was conducted in one Sinhalese and Tamil school in Colombo to identify the improvement areas for the questionnaire. Based on the pilot survey results the survey questionnaire was modified and improved. A separate questionnaire briefing was conducted for the supervisors and interviewers who took part in the survey prior to data collection. They were taken through the questionnaire in detail and explained the objective of each question.

The supervisors and interviewers were instructed to go to the selected school and talk to the principle and obtain permission to conduct the survey. As a separate letter was issued by the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation, most school principals facilitated and helped carry out the survey without any hesitation. In each school, as per the request of TNS supervisors, a separate room such as free class room, library or IT lab was arranged for students to fill the questionnaire.

The students to be surveyed were not preselected for the survey. They were selected by the principals/teachers in charge based on the availability on the particular day. Once the participating students settled in to the seats, the supervisors explained the questionnaire on how to mark the answers, skipping instructions etc. However the supervisors were requested not to assist the students to select the answers. After all students completed the questionnaire, the TNS supervisors checked every questionnaire for completeness before the students left the room to make sure they have answered all relevant questions.

Post the survey, all students were given refreshments (milk packets) as an appreciation for participating in the survey.

Selection of students
Initially it was decided, to select 50 students from each school covering 25 students who participated in cultural activities and 25 students who have not participated in cultural actives. With great support from teachers, each school was able to arrange students in the above number. If any school had other pre organized events on the day of the survey, maximum available number of students were covered from the school and the balance was covered from another school in the same region.

Problems incurred during field work
Initially the survey was proposed to be conducted in the Eastern province too. However, the implementing agency in informed that the events were not conducted in the Eastern province. As this province was a mainly Tamil/ Muslim dominant and there was no other province with similar characteristics to be selected in place of this province it was decided to stick to 4 provinces with a larger sample allocated to each province.

In some cases, Supervisors and interviewers faced issues of obtaining permission for the survey when the principle was not available. In such cases the supervisors had to revisit the school on a different day to conduct the survey.