

NAAL NEWS

Netherlands Alumni Association of Lanka (NAAL) Newsletter



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My Dear Friends,

Yes, It has been a long time we communicated with each other. Waiting for some important news related to NAAL 50 year celebrations , AGM and members' gathering, I did not release any newsletter since September 2021. As we reach an end of the COVID crisis, there are more challenging situations in the country. The EXCO met online and where possible physically as well to finalize documentation required to conduct the AGM but prevailing circumstances did not allow the EXCO to hold it as planned. So, I am happy to share the latest newsletter in order to enhance the link between NAAL and you, the membership.

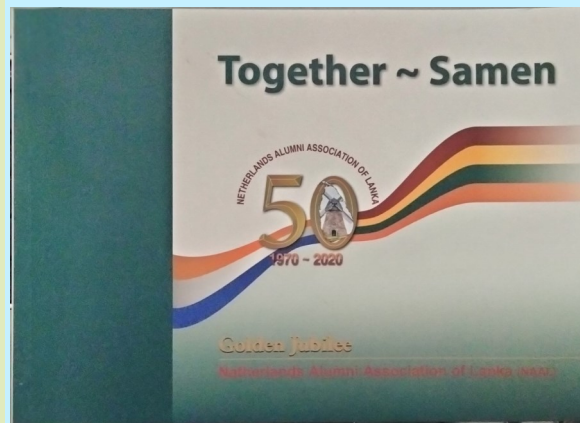
Let us together wish a fruitful recovery to issues we are facing today as citizens of Sri Lanka. Take care!

Linton Fernando
The Editor, NAAL

NAAL publishes a beautiful souvenir in commemoration of it's "50 years active existence".

NAAL EXCO published a memorable souvenir which contains the history, activities and projects carried out during the past 50 years. During the time where printing facilities were limited and increasing costs, NAAL managed to present the book and is available at NAAL office. It is named as **"Together ~ Samen"** where Samen is the Dutch word for Together. The front and the first pages are shown below.

Messages from Her Excellency the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Sri Lanka, Ms Tanja Gonggrijp and the Present President of NAAL Mr S P C Kumarasinghe decorate the book and some of the other articles are;



- About NAAL
- NAAL Projects
- Member Activities
- Members' memories
- NAAL - today and tomorrow

All members and well wishers will receive a copy of the book as a complement from NAAL.



A sub-committee appoint by NAAL worked really hard to print this out despite of many obstacles due to the situation of the country. NAAL funded this activity with the hope of sharing information among the stakeholders and other interested parties.

The Editor take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the good work carried out by all the members of the sub-committee, members who provided articles, photographs etc., and the publisher who contributed to make this project a success.

During the AGM, which NAAL tries to be conducted in August or September 2022, NAAL hopes to distribute the souvenir among the members. It is presently available at the NAAL office. The souvenir contains 90xA5 pages, almost all with colour photographs of related articles.

It is the responsibility of the present and future members to steer NAAL in the same momentum for the next 50 years and many more.



NAAL Secretariat at Dutch Period Museum

A place members don't forget...



This two storied large building with huge eight columns in front, reflecting the features of a 17th century, was built by Thomas Van Rhee, The Dutch Governor of Sri Lanka from 1692- 1697 as his official residence. During the British period in 1796 this building was used as a arms store of army and thereafter, as a police training centre and Pettah Post Office & Telecommunication centre. In 1973, Sri Lanka Government appointed a special preservation committee, in which NAAL played a prominent role.



With the assistance of the Netherlands government, they

opened the building for the public as Dutch Period Museum (DPM) on 10th July 1982. Then President of Sri Lanka H.E J R Jayewardene, many government officials, Members of NAAL, Dr Evert Jongens, who initiated funding for restoration of the DPM with NAAL, members of the committee who was responsible for restoration were among the participants at the opening ceremony. DPM exhibits over 3000 objects related to Dutch heritage in Sri Lanka.

NAAL, established in 1971, was an active member of this restoration committee appointed in 1973. While conducting NAAL committee meetings at the private residences of the committee presidents' and other ad-hoc locations, its official secretariat was opened at the DPM from the inception of DPM which proves that NAAL heritage of the DPM goes back well before the DPM was opened for public.

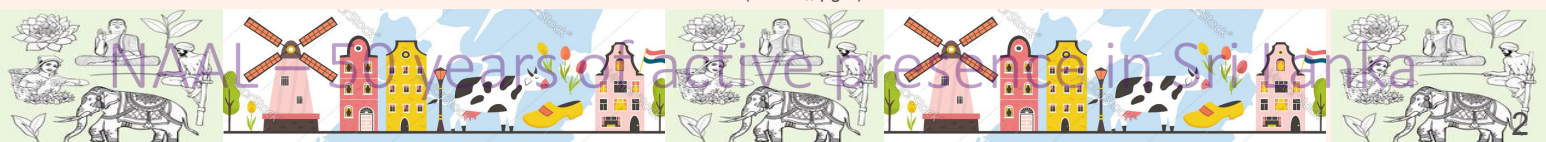
Form the time DPM was opened NAAL conducted their Executive Committee (EXCO) meetings, Annual General Meetings and also their member gatherings as well. One of the unforgettable functions for the membership was the annual new year celebrations specially focusing on the children of members. Photograph shows an event conducted at DPM.



Due to the retail and wholesale trading and business activities, the Prince street where the DPM is located, NAAL members faced many difficulties in reaching their office and parking facilities were disturbed during the day time. The present President offered his own office space for NAAL EXCO meetings considering the inconvenience caused by the committee members but maintained the DPM office and the address an 95, Prince Street, Colombo 11. The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Sri Lanka donated a valuable antique conference table and set of chairs for the use of NAAL at DPM. NAAL Administrative Secretary functioned from the DPM and NAAL conducted many functions at the DPM premises on Sundays when the traffic due to business activities became null.



(Contd ., pg 3)



NAAL Secretariat (contd.)



Few years back, the Department of Archeology started renovating the DPM for which NAAL also generated some funds to restore the lighting system. The Department is now considering to convert the NAAL secretariat as an auditorium. NAAL intervened and managed to secure a larger area for NAAL office and will be available when the renovations are over.



While offering sincere appreciations to the Present President of NAAL Mr S P C Kumarasinghe who always accommodated NAAL to conduct their official tasks at his own office, it is time to restore the NAAL office with more facilities at DPM as a formal secretariat. The valuable furniture that reflected the Dutch period and other office equipment is now located at an unsafe corner of DPM and a considerable renovation work is unavoidable. NAAL EXCO is now working on the best way of re-establishing its secretariat at DPM as soon and the finishing work of the DPM completed by the Government.

(References: *The Netherlands –Ceylon Heritage* by Dr E. Jongens , translated by Dr K D Paranavitana revised addition 2012)

NAAL - Today and Tomorrow

NAAL conducted the last AGM in 2019 appointing a new EXCO for the year 2020. Due to COVID health issues NAAL couldn't conduct an AGM for 2020 and with the approval from members the same committee continued for the year 2021 and 2022 as well. Due to unforeseen circumstances NAAL could not implement many activities it planned for celebrating the 50th Anniversary of NAAL. The most important activity was the symposium and members' gathering. NAAL hope to conduct these programs as soon as the present situation eases. The picture below shows the NAAL EXCO during this Golden Jubilee year 2021. Most of them are members of NAAL for more than thirty years.

As everyone knows, all of EXCO members are working voluntarily and hold prestigious positions in the government & private sector. With their dedication and total commitment , NAAL managed to secure its funds to subsidize membership events considerably and sometimes free of charge. The present savings of NAAL funds accumulated during the past fifty years proves the careful use of hard-earned funds by all present and past EXCO members of NAAL. Now, most of the sources of funds have changed and NAAL must work on its earnings as well. Therefore, it is the correct time to direct NAAL to a different direction. The younger generation's involvement in active participation in the management of NAAL is very important and essential.



Seated from left to right :T G Wijeratne (Assist. Treasurer), Linton Fernando (Editor), Sarath Jayathilaka (Vice President), S P C Kumarasinghe (President), S B Niyangoda (vice President), S Hettiarachchi (Treasurer) Nihal Fernando (Social Secretary), Thamara Mallawaarachchi (Assist. Secretary
Standing from left to right: Committee Members WA M G S Abeysinghe, Mahinda Padmasiri, Karuna Speldewwinde , Shantha Fernando, Sumithra Fernando, O M Weerasooriya.
Not in the Picture: W H Munasinghe (Secretary) Indira Samarasinghe (Committee Member)

(Contd... on pg 4)



NAAL Today and Tomorrow (Contd.)

Identifying these challenges, NAAL conducted a “Two Day Residential” brainstorming session for EXCO members in 2014 and the outcome is summarized below;

1. Create awareness
Local and Foreign students/institutions
2. Undertake assignments
preparing project proposals
Search for funds local/foreign
3. Create awareness of international and fellowships
4. Partner with other international / local Alumni associations
Join Activities – cultural and professional
5. Get involved in Development activities of the country which NAAL can support
6. Take an active role in disaster situations - Regional/national
7. Building an office for NAAL
Maintain the office at DPM
Create avenues for meetings
8. Workout on annual events
Family gathering
Guest lecture with networking evening
AGM and family outing
Entertainment events
Other networking programs
9. Conducting EXCO meetings for proper administration
10. Members' development activities on Professional and Personal Development

Further, in 2020 NAAL conducted a survey among members to understand their requirements and the main three concerns were;

1. Networking among members, families & alumni networks
2. Share knowledge, experience and development work
3. To obtain updated information on the Netherlands and looking for opportunities.

It is said that any Alumni network will function only on three main concepts - Development, Networking and Fun (DAF). All above activities need to be funded by NAAL or a generous sponsor. Therefore, it is clear that NAAL has to focus clearly on the requirements of the next generation and make use of the latest technological advancements in maintain and enhancing the networking of membership and stakeholders.

In this context, NAAL present EXCO must be ready to hand over the steering wheel to a new generation with their fullest support in order to thrive in the dynamic and challenging world.

Let us all work together to steer NAAL to the next level.

STUDY IN HOLLAND

The Netherlands stands out for its great inventiveness, its problem-solving attitude and its openness to the world.

Dutch institutions offer many international study programmes and courses covering a broad range of fields. Studying in Holland gives you high quality education and research in an international study environment

Find out what makes studying in the Netherlands a good option

Take a look at this short video and find out more at <https://www.studyinholland.nl/>

Source: FB page of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Sri Lanka and Maldives

<https://www.facebook.com/NLambassadeColombo>

Try to solve

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Notice to members

NAAL will conduct the next AGM as early as possible when the transport facilities become normal. Due to postal issues it may be difficult to send documents by post. Please share your name, email address and Whatsapp number with naal.srilanka@gmail.com

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction.”
- Albert Einstein

