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Colombo 6,  
Sri Lanka

29<sup>th</sup> October, 2016

Dr. Peter Masters,  
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I am writing to you on behalf of all the Trustees of The Sunshine Charity on the on-going issue of our 'partnership' with Grace Education Care Centre (GECC) in implementing the Sunshine Day Care Centre's operational work.

To recall, the day care centre was established as a post tsunami project in Sambalthivu, Trincomalee. The reason our organization selected a day care centre is because while working as a Consultant with UNICEF, on the advice given by the UNICEF Head, the greatest need at the time was a day care centre. This was confirmed by the Presidential Task Force for Tsunami Recovery whose Coordinator I was, personally appointed by the then President of Sri Lanka.

Searching for a valuable organization which could support our project at ground level, I was introduced as Founder Trustee of The Sunshine Charity, to Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth, Director, GECC by Tony Senewiratne at the time Head of Habitat for Humanity, Sri Lanka. I was also a Board Member of Habitat. The Trustees were keen to implement a sustainable project and therefore purchased a block of land to build the Sunshine Day Care Centre at 6<sup>th</sup> Milepost, Nilaweli Road, Sambalthivu, Trincomalee. Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth at the same time, purchased a block next door to ours to build a home for boys and girls and Habitat for Humanity also purchased a block of land adjoining. All three organizations looked forward to serving the community – together.

For almost eleven long years since the day care centre was established in 2005, everyone worked in harmony. Though there were many gaps prevailing between GECC and The Sunshine Charity we resolved them amicably. Among them, the most difficult ones being that GECC provided an unskilled staff, a manager who was not interactive and unable to submit any progress reports and child care personnel who did not understand the 'needs of the children' according to expected standards both locally and internationally. Our responsibilities increased as-a-result.

As we continued to stay in touch with the situation on ground, understanding the reasons for the lack of skills, we applied for an Organizational Grant (OD Grant) from a Washington based organization which would help us to change this situation to enable us to implement our work more efficiently. The grant was approved and we selected the following areas which needed strengthening most -

- Planning
- Human Resources
- Monitoring & Evaluation

We included staff from GECC to share this opportunity. Hence, employees of GECC were among the beneficiaries for the many workshops conducted during the two- year grant period.

- 1) Subashini Lourd Thangaraja
- 2) S. Padmini
- 3) Pushparani Parameshwaran
- 4) T.Jansy
- 5) Mahendran Pushpa
- 6) Celline Fernando
- 7) J.Sayajini
- 8) S.Mallika
- 9) M. Amudakalla

Because of this investment in human resources, the above nine persons could call themselves trained day care teachers. We were fortunate, as the Government issued a statement shortly after, that it was mandatory to have trained staff even at day care centers. The certificate held by the above-mentioned personnel are good to go for the moment but in the long term, a certificate issued by the Sri Lanka Open University or a recognized Vocational Training Centre is mandatory according to the Prime Minister's Statement made early this year.

It was at the beginning of 2016 that we encountered our first serious challenge. Having raised funds for a new building and construction complete, on a visit to the centre we found that instructions were not followed by the staff to take charge of the new building and utilize the additional space for the children.

"Pastor Jeyakanth has told us not to do so as the new building is meant for GECC work only" is what all three staff members working partly with the Sunshine Day Care Centre told us.

1. Celine Fernando
2. Pushparani Parameshwaran
3. S. Padmini

We were taken aback. We asked Pastor Jeyakanth if he had said so which he denied. "Three people told us this and now what? Who were we to trust" is what we Trustees asked ourselves. **This was the initial reason to initiate stricter checks and balances.**

On an unannounced second visit, close upon the first, we experienced the following:

1. Substandard lunch time meal – an item provided for under the Sunshine budget with detail guidelines given to the staff and Pastor Jeyakanth on providing a nutritious meal per donor's request was not adhered to.
2. The budget also includes for one glass of milk per child per day (5 days a week). On our visit, the glass of milk had more tea than milk – in other words it was milk tea for a child!

3. Having told the staff number of times by way of nutrition workshops and advisory notes that children should avoid sweet biscuits due to child diabetes among vulnerable children in Sri Lanka, they were eating sweets and biscuits. There was absolutely no management review.
4. The appointed Manager NEVER monitors this or other challenging issues. As usual he was seated unconcerned, at his Grace office and was unable to respond.
5. When we visited, there was only one teacher for around 35 children. The other two were at Grace office and we were told this is the usual practice.

Since then we, that is the Trustees of The Sunshine Charity and Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth have had serious issues which lead us to believe that we are not able to have GECC support our work.

The Sunshine Charity, registered by a Trust Deed was established as a post-tsunami project in 2005 to take care of children affected by the tsunami living in the Eastern Province. Today, the 35 children attending the centre include orphaned and vulnerable children and those affected by poverty. It has always been a service to the community free of any charges. Providing the children with nutritional food, creative opportunities, medical examination and pharmaceutical drugs among others form part of the programme. To manage the day to day operational work, we invited a local organization, The Grace Education Care Centre (GECC) under the leadership of its Director, Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth to support our work. The collaboration between the two organizations have now run into problems as detailed below:

## 1.

At the early stages an attendance certificate was awarded to each child. Without the knowledge of the Trustees, Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth has changed the format of the certificate from 'day care' to 'pre-school'.

In addition, he has used our Charity's registration number on this certificate. We were unaware of this till now.

### - Attached are certificates

- 1) the original certificate designed by the trustees of The Sunshine Charity which clearly states at the top, "Sunshine Day Care Centre" and
- 2) Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth issued certificates which state, "Sunshine Charity Pre-School" and he also uses our Charity's registration number.

## 2.

The management of Grace Education Care Centre (also known as Children for Jesus) has demanded from each child, a payment of Rs. 1,500/- on admission and a monthly fee of Rs. 500/- As said, the Trustees of The Sunshine Charity established the centre as a free service to the community and does not expect any child to be a paid student. We learnt of this only on our second unannounced visit early 2016. On this visit, many of the mothers we met, told us of their difficulties coming to day care center on the account of their demanding money from parents. One mother in-fact told us how Celine Fernando had asked her to remove her child as she could not pay that month's fees.

### - Attached are two hand-written receipts provided by two mothers.

### 3.

There is a common drive-way leading to GECC, The Sunshine Day Care Centre and bare land owned by Habitat for Humanity. In the last couple of months, GECC has constructed a gate on the common drive-way preventing us from entering our own premises independently. We were NOT informed of the arrangement and neither were we given the keys. We were debarred from entering our premises on the last visit.

### 4.

Over the last twelve years, The Sunshine Charity has invited many organizations and individuals to support our work. We have not looked at religious identity when doing so. Sri Lanka's largest grass-root organization, Sarvodaya Shramadana is one of them. They have conducted numerous health and nutrition camps. We also have donors from various faiths who have raised funds and donated funds for our work. We have never looked at religious identity then or now. Neither have the donors.

This is what Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth earlier commented:

*"..... Sarvodaya is a very reputable organization and I have nothing but praise for it. However, I work under the Lanka Evangelical Fellowship of Churches, which is essentially an evangelical Christian organisation. As such **I cannot be in partnership with a non-Christian organization**. If you and your trustees decide to form a partnership with Sarvodaya, there is nothing that I can do but terminating our partnership and wishing you Well.....".*

Why did he think so after twelve years??? We only have invited Sarvodaya to conduct medical and nutrition programmes. We did not invite the organization to be a partner!

An email being circulated to many all over the world which was forwarded to me:

From: Gary Donaldson <[gary@lankachurches.org](mailto:gary@lankachurches.org)>  
 Date: 27 August 2016 at 18:49  
 Subject: SRI LANKA URGENT PRAYER REQUEST  
 To: Barry Owen <[barry@lankachurches.org](mailto:barry@lankachurches.org)>

Excerpts from this email read:

1. This morning I got an urgent phone call from our head office in 6th Mile Post. They informed me that a team of army and police personal had turned up a few hours ago and along with Trustee members of the sunshine nursery charity in order to **forcefully get access to the nursery building**, accusing our staff and creating pain and fear among our people.

Our response: Forcefully? **The property belongs to The Sunshine Charity**. They did not allow us to enter our own property so they call it forcefully?? Celine Fernando refused to allow us to enter. She refused to give us the keys saying the property belonged to Pastor Jeyakanth. We already knew some of the other incidents also. Inevitably we had to therefore go to the police who came with us to our compound. She and office assistant Pushparani then told the police that the property

belonged to Pastor Jeyakanth. So, did the manager (newly joined)! Pastor Jeyakanth's brother (I think) kicked and raised his finger at us, abusing for entering and warning us of repercussions.

The police asked them to report to the Nilaweli Police Station. It was here that they admitted they lied and that the land belongs to The Sunshine Charity. Also, Pastor Jeyakanth too admitted in one of his emails that land and buildings belong to The Sunshine Charity. By the way, Pastor Jeyakanth was present when the Country Director of The Asia Foundation visited the land to conduct due diligence on the purchase of the land and building a day care centre on behalf of the donor.

- *The land is Trust Land and attached is the Deed.*

2. **sunshine charity was founded with Christian people**
3. **Recently they accepted a Buddhist as a trustee member**

Our response: Absolutely incorrect. No one referred to religion when we established the centre. Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth did not ask for our religion for twelve long years. How come he does so now? Four of the Trustees are Christians. One is Buddhist. Pastor Jeyakanth has interacted with the latter many times. He has also accepted funds raised by her. Did he see her as a Buddhist then? We were disappointed at the rumor he spreads of us via email as if we were not allowing them to teach Christianity and wanted to spread Buddhism hence they were opposing us. It is a patent lie.

- *Attached is the Trust Deed*

4. They have some **powerful connections to the security forces**

Our response: Our country has just come out of a long period of conflict. We have finally won peace. Our Constitution in the making wants to assure our citizens that we have the same rights, the same dignity and the same values. We need to build on this to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation. We do not have to compromise on our faith to do so and neither is the State demanding us to do so in the process.

I am proud to say I am a Christian in the Anglican faith and my family is the same. My nephew, an awardee of a tenure at the University of Cambridge having completed his PhD studies at Christ College, Cambridge and now one of their youngest Professors, is also a lay preacher at his church. His father, a Hindu seeing his son's faith became a Christian a couple of years ago. My grand-father, founder of Sri Lanka's first Vocational College, The Polytechnic married a Hindu but became a Christian seeing my grandfather's commitment to his faith. He taught his children that they should study not only for themselves but to serve community and country. They never brought in religion lived the Christian life.

The behavior of the GECC staff (the manager, Celine Fernando, Pushparani and Ravi) was not something either my friend and Trustee Roshan Peries or I expected. It was extremely embarrassing and demeaning to say the least. The police too witnessed this behaviour. They are Buddhist and told us, "Madam, these are not Christian people – they are hooligans who have no religion."

Roshan is an Evangelical Christian but we both have never had to face religious outbursts as outlined in this email. We work for the benefit of our country and people.

I am married to the grand-son of Sir Paul Peries, Ceylon's first Trade Commissioner to the UK and Lady Hilda Obeysekera. My husband's cousin is the former President Chandrika Bandaranaike and my son's father-in-law is Field Marshall Sarath Fonseka. My brother-in-law is the world-famous Cellist Rohan de Saram who lives in London. I am not here to boast of my heritage or status. Neither is Roshan who comes from an equally illustrious family. We are not saying this to be boastful but rather to say that in-spite of 'powerful connections' our service to community for twelve years was not meant to make us powerful. We used our status to the advantage of community.

I would like to mention here that when I look back on the years I remember Pastor Jeyakanth asking me not to trust my friend Roshan. He also asked me not to trust Tony Senewiratne who introduced me to him. I am convinced now that he opted for the divide and rule game so that he ends up being the winner. He almost did but God was on our side and I did not go the way he wanted me to.

On a last note, which one of the mothers brought to our notice – "Pastor Jeyakanth has told us that The Sunshine Charity used the pictures of children to raise funds for themselves and not the centre."

They also told us that they were not aware of the Charity sending a monthly cheque for operational work as they were told we were fake partners. If this is true or not we would like you to be aware that even if it is one mother, we hear her voice.

I must admit that the reason I am writing to you now is because many members of the community at large in Sambalthivu encouraged us to do so, saying you were someone who will understand the situation and would have an un-bias mind to resolve. We decided to trust their judgement.

On the advice of our lawyers, DL & F de Saram <http://desaram.com/our-experts/#1454960069676-7bd6e523-291b> we were compelled to bring to the notice of the Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government, the Governor of the Eastern Province and the Chief Minister, Eastern Province the reason we would like to close the day care centre, that being:

1. Referring to the day care centre as a pre-school
2. Issuing a Pre- School Certificate under the Sunshine Charity registration number
3. Charging of fees

as we will be held accountable for what is taking place on the compound. In addition to this, the on-going rape charge against George (Assistant Pastor to Pastor Jeyakanth). We are aware that this case is on-going in the high court in Trincomlee against him. I too have the medical report of the abused girl.

We certainly do not want to be held liable for misconduct at this stage after so many years of giving our time, energy and talent to community and country. We individually hold our own jobs. You are welcome to view this at [www.sunshinecharity.org](http://www.sunshinecharity.org)

My two children live in NY and I do not in any way want the US Government to hold them accountable for wrong doings. It would hurt their youthful life.

We also do not want these incidents to go public. As you may have heard, the Boddu Bala Sena (BBS) was founded on the claim that Evangelical Christian organizations were carrying out unethical conversions in Sri Lanka harming the Buddhist identity of the country. Our story would be exactly what they are looking for. It would be the worse form of ammunition which would boomerang on all Christian churches. This is not our intention. Neither do we want the story to go be a media sensation.

Even though we have been supporting the day center for many years, we have sufficient evidence that the funds are being raised in the UK by Pastor Jeyakanth for this day center under a pre-school from various sources. This is not acceptable. It is only The Sunshine Charity which can do so. We decline to touch on other related stories to Pastor Jeyakanth as we would like to be focus on our own matter.

We therefore ask you to kindly request Pastor Selvaraj Jeyakanth to hand over the premises to the Sunshine Charity. We have no intention to sell this property to him. The Trust Deed, under the clause 'Disposable' does not allow us to do so. He is welcome to take all the children and start a day care centre at his premises, albeit using our registered name, The Sunshine Day Care Centre. We will take charge of the building and manage it ourselves with the support of another Evangelical Christian organization.

I am also attaching a list of value added services we have provided to the centre as we have been accused of not doing enough according to Celine and Pushparani who said, "Pastor Jeyakanth is willing to leave if you pay him Rs. 3 million for his investment."

- *Attached is the value-added services provided*

We welcome your intervention...since we know you are renown for your integrity and honesty. We would be happy if you could kindly acknowledge this letter.

Thanking you,

With kind regards,

on behalf of all the Trustees of The Sunshine Charity,

Sharadha de Saram

Founder Trustee – The Sunshine Charity

*Ps. A hard copy of the same letter, duly signed has been mailed today*