

Country: *Sri Lanka*

Name: *In Place of War “Theatre Dialogues”*

Artistic Medium: *Theater*

Contact: Charlotte Hennessey: charlotte.hennessey@inplaceofwar.net

<http://www.inplaceofwar.net/project/casestudy1.htm>

Objective: to map and document examples of current theatre practice in war-affected Sri Lanka; assess the social, political and cultural impact of performance events; and explore the ethical dilemmas arising from practice.

Abstract: Sri Lanka has undergone 20 years of civil war, with conventional trench war, guerilla style insurrection and suicide attacks. This history of conflict has led to over 60,000 deaths and many injured and displaced people. Local artists, theater companies and communities have used theater performance to respond to this violence.



“In Place of War” is planning to carry out a mapping exercise, including a narrative interview project with theater practitioners who were active during the civil war as well as theater companies still practicing in the country. There is very little publicly available information on theater projects during the 20 year civil war, so the main aim of the project is to have a permanent database based on the experiences and interviews of the practitioners. It is clear that although there is little information, there were a lot of theater groups operating in the North and South of Sri Lanka as well as areas not directly affected by the conflict.

The outcome will be a report in Tamil, Sinhalese and English that will be used to facilitate dialogue in Sri Lanka and internationally about the conflict. Narratives are used in order to provide insights on how theater survived during the war and helped communities deal with times of extreme stress and loss.