

Write to Reconcile Increases Access for Emerging Writers from the Sri Lankan Diaspora

Write to Reconcile, a **free** creative writing project with an emphasis on reconciliation is looking for writers from the Sri Lankan Diaspora between the ages of 18-29 who are interested in participating **online** in this innovative creative writing project, inaugurated and taught by the internationally renowned writer Shyam Selvadurai. The award winning writer, Nayomi Munaweera, is also part of the creative team.

In the past, attending a Residential Workshop in Sri Lanka was a mandatory part of the Project, but Selvadurai realized that coming to Sri Lanka to participate in the workshop was too difficult financially for many members of the diaspora, as well as getting leave from work or school was too hard. “I wanted to make the Project more accessible to them,” Shyam said. “It is important to get their point of view too. They were key players in the war and should also be a part of post-war reconciliation.” So, this year, *Write to Reconcile* is offering between 5-10 places for participants from the diaspora who want to only participate online.

Diaspora participants are, however, welcome to also attend the Residential Workshop that will take place in Anuradhapura this year. During the workshop, participants will be taught the craft of creative writing. In the evenings, there will be visits by human rights workers who will talk about their life and work, as well as the screening of films that are related to the theme of reconciliation. Participants will make 2 field trips into the Vani and the Border Villages to meet with villagers from these areas, sit in their homes and find out first-hand their experience of the war and about their lives post-war. The hope is that these visits will inspire some wonderful creative work.

Following the workshop, diasporic applicants and their Sri Lankan counterparts will participate in two three-week online forums, during which they will present their work to their group. These creative pieces will be discussed and suggestions for improvement will be offered. Shyam and Nayomi will also participate in and supervise these forums. Following the Forums, each participant will work with Shyam to edit one of their pieces and prepare it for publication in the *Write to Reconcile Anthology 3* which will be released in March 2017 and distributed free island-wide, as well internationally, through an online version. The previous 2 anthologies can be read at www.writetoreconcile.com

The Project is funded by the American Centre and takes place under the auspices of the National Peace Council. For more information and to download an application go to www.writetoreconcile.com. The application deadline is **April 29th**.