



Kanniya Hot Springs, Trincomalee

**Living with Violent
Heritage: contests
and co-existence in
post-war Sri Lanka**
International workshop

24th-25th March 2023
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Living with Violent Heritage: contests and co-existence in post-war Sri Lanka

**Held at ICES (International Centre for Ethnic Studies)
02 Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka**

This international workshop explores the relationship between heritage, memory and conflict in the increasingly fraught setting of post-war Sri Lanka. Here, cultural and natural heritage have become weaponized tools of symbolic and sometimes physical violence, straining inter-ethnic relations and rupturing social cohesion in ways that policy makers and the international community have yet to address. At the same time, Sri Lanka has produced numerous efforts at grassroots heritage, remembrance and arts activism that seek to promote truth, justice, and reconciliation. Investigators and participants in the Living with Violent Heritage Exchange (LIVHERE) will present recent research findings alongside invited presenters and discussants. The discussions will encompass: the politics of memorialization, commemoration and documentation; new paths for Sri Lankan heritage and arts practice; national education and public history; and the idea and practice of reconciliation.

Conveners:

Mark R. Frost
Darshi Thoradeniya,
Nirmal Dewasiri,
Hasini Hapunthanthri
Neluni Tillekeratne

Workshop organizers:

Melanie Horstead (m.horstead@ucl.ac.uk Whatsapp +44 7731937514)
Neluni Tillekeratne (tillekeratne.neluni@gmail.com, phone Whatsapp +94 773524840)

Workshop Agenda

Sri Lanka Time (UTC+05:30)	Panels
Day 1: Friday 24 th March – link: https://ucl.zoom.us/j/99236077240	
09.00 –09.20am	Welcome coffee at ICES
09.20-09.40am	Welcome remarks: introducing LiVHERE'
09.40-11.10am	<p>Panel 1: <i>Neglecting, Forgetting, Erasing</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mark R. Frost, 'Sites of Neglect: a report from LIVHERE's Nov 22 and Feb 23 field trips' 2. Nira Wickramasinghe, 'The work of forgetting: some preliminary thoughts' 3. Anoma Pieris, 'Voluntary Amnesias, Choosing to Forget' <p>Discussant: Nirmal Dewasiri</p>
11.10- 11.30am	BREAK
11.30-1.20pm	<p>Panel 2: <i>Remembering, Documenting, Commemorating</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ruki Fernando, 'The politics of memorialization and the right to mourn' 2. Samal Hemchandra, 'Digital remembrance: The JVP insurrections on social media' Q&A (10min) 3. Darshi Thoradeniya, 'Report on current and future LIVHERE research' 4. Nirmal Dewasiri and Darshi Thoradeniya, 'Remembering the Violent Heritage of the JVP insurrections' <p>Discussant: Anoma Pieris (20min)</p>
1.20-2.20pm	LUNCH
2.20- 4pm	<p>Panel 3: <i>Re-presenting Sri Lankan Heritage</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mark R. Frost, 'Heritage and structural violence: report on LIVHERE visits to Slave Island & Nuwara Eliya, Nov 22 and Feb 23' 2. Sujit Sivasundaram, "'Muslim Colombo"? Constructions of ordinary presence and material heritage in the city' 3. Zoltan Biedermann (online from UK) , 'Where is Sri Lanka's Early Modern heritage? Some thoughts on hybridity, ruins and loss' 4. Melathi Saldin, (online from Australia) 'The role of grassroots heritage organizations in enhancing community resilience in postwar Sri Lanka' <p>Discussant: Nira Wickramasinghe</p>
4.00- 4.20pm	BREAK

Day 1: Continued	
4.20-5.30pm	<p>Panel 4: Film Screening:</p> <p>INTRODUCTION Mario Gomez</p> <p><i>In Plain Sight</i> (2023, 50 mins) Ruvín De Silva (Film director) Sakina Aliakbar (Writer)</p> <p>Mass graves are public secrets. They exist within our peripherals, and yet, the intricacies and details of what exists beneath the ground is buried and done away from public consciousness. 'In Plain Sight' attempts to uncover these secrets by exploring Sri Lanka's complicated socio-political history, the named sites and events surrounding these locations and the families and people affected by the incidents and unanswered questions that continue to haunt Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Q&A with the director Ruvín De Silva, moderated by Darshi Thoradeniya</p>
<p>All participants are welcome to join us for DRINKS AND SNACKS at the ROOFTOP BAR JETWING COLOMBO 7 from 7.30pm</p>	
<p>Day 2: Saturday 25th March – link: https://ucl.zoom.us/j/97814279570</p>	
9.00-9.30am	Welcome coffee at ICES
9.30-11am	<p>Panel 5: Reconciliation, Pacification, and Peace-building</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mark R. Frost, 'Reconciliation as practice: thoughts from another time and place' 2. Edward Vickers, 'Peace-building or pacification? "Social and emotional learning" in peace education' 3. Neluni Tillekeratne, 'The practice of peacebuilding: reflections on the ground' <p>Discussant: Ruki Fernando</p>
11-11.20am	BREAK
11.20 - 1.20pm	<p>Panel 6: Educating and Re-educating</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lasni Buddhibhashika, Edward Vickers and Daniel Schumacher (online from Germany), <i>The politics of history education in Sri Lanka's schools: joint presentation on LIVHERE fieldwork Nov-Feb 22-23</i> 2. Nideka Nanayakkara, 'Promoting violence through history education: An analysis of history education in secondary schools in Sri Lanka' 3. Hasini Haputhanthri, 'Re-presenting the Bandaranaiques: feminism, internationalism and original violence' <p>Discussant: Shamara Wettimuny</p>
1.20-2:00pm.	LUNCH

2pm-3.30pm	Panel 7: LIVHERE - missing pieces future plans 1. Mark R. Frost, 'Report on future plans and outputs' 2. Neluni Tillekeratne, 'The case for a Sri Lankan peacemakers' forum and PEACE MAP' 3. Hasini Hapunthanthri, 'Further avenues for old heritage and new heritage' GROUP Discussion
3.30pm-4pm	BREAK
4pm - 5pm	Project Planning Meeting for core LIVHERE team – Nirmal, Darshi, Edward, Mark, Neluni, Lasni, Hasini, Melanie
<p style="text-align: center;"> All participants are invited to join us for a WORKSHOP DINNER at the nearby Maniumpathy restaurant from 7pm. https://maniumpathy.com/heritage [Please inform Melanie of your attendance and any dietary requirements] </p>	

PRESENTERS and DISCUSSANTS

Sakina Aliakbar , Writer, Filmmaker

Sakina Aliakbar is a writer, editor, filmmaker, actor, educator and an evolving music artist. Her work, conceptualised in Melbourne, Australia, where she undertook postgraduate studies in Creative Writing & Publishing. She is now focusing on sexuality, identity and race studies with an alternative twist. She is interested in the criticisms of the arts field across diverse mediums - prose, audio and film, as well as developing progressive and creative curriculums for young children. She is currently working on launching a literary journal in Sri Lanka, where she is based.

Zoltan Biedermann, UCL (online UK) - z.biedermann@ucl.ac.uk

Zoltán Biedermann is Professor of Early Modern History, specializing in the history of early global interactions occurring in the context of "European expansion" especially in Asia. His focus is on early modern diplomacy, imperial ideas, travel writing, material culture, cartography and spatial politics, particularly in settings involving the Portuguese, but also other Europeans including Spanish, Dutch, English and French travellers and agents of empire. He is the author of, amongst other works: *(Dis)connected Empires: Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia* (2018), *The Portuguese in Sri Lanka and South India* (2014) and *The Historical Atlas of the Persian Gulf* (2006) . He has also co-edited *Global Gifts: the Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (with Giorgio Riello and Anne Gerritsen, Cambridge University Press, 2018) and *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History* (with Alan L. Strathern, UCL Press, 2017).

Lasni Buddhibhashika, Kyushu University & LIVHERE researcher - lasni.mck@gmail.com

Lasni Buddhibhashika Jayasooriya is a PhD candidate at Department of Education, Kyushu University, Japan who researches politics in language policies in post-war Sri Lanka. She is also exploring Sri Lankan school curricula in general and education's impact on post-war reconciliation. She has an MSc degree in

Development Communication from the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, and she also spent a year affiliated to Saga University, Japan. She has a Masters degrees in TESL and Sociology, and has published research papers in the fields of education, sociology and cultural studies. Having started her professional career as a teacher, she then worked as a school curriculum developer (for Sri Lanka's NIE) and teacher trainer. Before embarking on her PhD, she was an administrative officer at the University of Peradeniya.

Ruvín de Silva, filmmaker - ruvinsds@gmail.com

Ruvín is a multidisciplinary artist based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, who has been actively involved in Sri Lanka's theatre scene since 2007. He's played lead roles in several plays and has acted in both international and local films and television. He's also a photographer, a visual artist, a sound designer, and a filmmaker currently focusing on making documentaries. As an actor both on stage and on screen, he has appeared in Jake Oorloff's *A Bedtime Story*, Steve De La Zilwa's *Mountain Language* and the BBC radio production *The Last Time I saw Richard*, and as Raju in the movie *Vara: A Blessing* (2013, directed by Khyentse Norbu). He holds a BA in Graphic Design and is the Co-Associate Artistic Director for Mind Adventures Theatre Company.

Nirmal Dewasiri, Colombo & LIVHERE co-PI - dnnrdewasiri@history.cmb.ac.lk

Nirmal Ranjith Dewasiri studied history at the University of Colombo for his BA (1991) and received his MPhil from the same university in 2000, where he serves as a Professor now. He has an Advanced Masters (2002) and a PhD (2007) from the Leiden University, The Netherlands. He also has a diploma in Conflict Resolution (1994) from Uppsala University, Sweden. He was the Sri Lankan Studies Chair at the South Asia Institute (SAI), Heidelberg University from April to September, 2017. His research interests include, social transformations in colonial societies, historiography and ethno-nationalist ideologies in Sri Lanka, Post-colonial state formation in Sri Lanka and radical political movements. He is also a Co-Principal Investigator of the LIVHERE project.

Ruki Fernando, lawyer and activist - rukiiii@gmail.com

Ruki Fernando is a Sri Lankan human rights activist, engaged in training on human rights and transitional justice and writing about human rights violations. He is based in Colombo and has travelled extensively in war affected North and East. He works with survivors, victim families of violations and communities affected by war and violence. Memorialization, enforced disappearances, land, political prisoners, freedom of expression and international advocacy have been amongst his areas of involvement.

Mark R. Frost, UCL and LIVHERE lead PI - m.frost@ucl.ac.uk

Mark Ravinder Frost is Associate Professor of Public History at UCL, with research interests in war, empire and decolonization in modern Asia, and their place in popular memory. He was educated at the University of Oxford, where he graduated with First Class Honours, and completed his doctorate at the University of Cambridge in 2002. He is the author of *Singapore: A Biography* (2009; 2012, co-authored by Yu-mei Balasingamchow) which in 2010 won the Asia Pacific Publishers Association Gold Medal and was selected as a CHOICE 'Outstanding Academic Title'. This book was based on his work as Content Director and Senior Scriptwriter for the National Museum of Singapore's award-winning Singapore History Gallery (2006-2015). Currently, he leads the ongoing 'War Memoryscapes in Asia Partnership' ([WARMAP http://www.warheritage.info/](http://www.warheritage.info/)) as well as being Lead PI for LIVHERE. Mark has also been involved in other exhibition design and documentary film ventures. *Scene Unseen*, his first feature-length documentary (which he wrote, co-devised and co-produced) premiered at the Singapore International Film Festival in February 2021 and won the award for Best Documentary on Music at the Bangkok International Documentary Awards Festival (BKK Docs) in 2022.

Mario Gomez, Executive Director ICES - mario@ices.lk

Mario Gomez is the Executive Director at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Sri Lanka. He was previously a Lecturer in public law, human rights and gender studies at the University of Colombo. He has published in the areas of human rights, constitutional reform, public law, gender equality and transitional justice. He has a PhD in law and teaches occasionally at the University of Colombo. He was a one-time member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka, a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government, and is a Member of the Board, Foundation for the Development of International Law in Asia (DILA).

Hasini Haputhanthri, ICES & LIVHERE senior researcher- hasini.haputhanthri@outlook.com

Hasini Haputhanthri is a Sri Lankan development professional, arts manager, curator and artist. She's involved in a global network of researchers and practitioners on historical dialogue and reconciliation. Initially trained as a sociologist at Delhi University India and Lund University Sweden, she then also specialized in Oral History and Museum Anthropology at Columbia University New York. Finishing her 10-year stint with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Hasini now works as an independent consultant and researcher. Amongst her notable publications are *Archive of Memory: reflections on 70 years of independence in Sri Lanka* (2019, co-authored with Malathi De Alwis) and *Museums, Memory and Identity Politics in Sri Lanka* (2021). Hasini is also part of the Bosch Alumni Group that founded the World Art and Memory Museum and has been its overall curator and project lead since its inception.

Samal Hemachandra, Colombo - samal@history.cmb.ac.lk

Samal Vimukthi Hemachandra is a Lecturer (Probationary) at the Department of History, University of Colombo. He obtained an MA in Political Science from Central European University, MA in Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory from Kingston University, London and BA in History from University of Colombo. He previously held positions at the Centre for Poverty Analysis, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies and INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre. His research interests extend to nationalism and politics of marginalized communities in Sri Lanka and has published on the 1971 revolt in Sri Lanka and social media politics.

Nideka Nanayakkara, Colombo - nideka@history.cmb.ac.lk

Nideka is a Lecturer (Probationary) at the Department of History, University of Colombo. Currently she is reading for her MPhil at University of Colombo, Department of History focusing on History education in secondary education level in Sri Lanka. She obtained her BA degree from University of Colombo with a first class honours in 2015. Her research interests are history education and historical consciousness.

Anoma Peiris, Melbourne - apieris@unimelb.edu.au

Anoma Pieris is a Professor of Architecture at the Melbourne School of Design. Her most recent publications include the anthology *Architecture on the Borderline: Boundary Politics and Built Space* (2019) and *The Architecture of Confinement: Incarceration Camps of the Pacific War* (2022), co-authored with Lynne Horuchi. Anoma was guest curator with Martino Stierli, Sean Anderson and Evangelos Kotsioris of the 2022 MoMA exhibition, *The Project of Independence: Architectures of Decolonization in South Asia, 1947-1985*.

Melathi Saldin, Deakin, (online Melbourne) - melathi.saldin@gmail.com

Melathi Saldin is an archaeologist and critical heritage scholar with over a decade of academic and professional experience in the heritage field in Australia and Sri Lanka. She has a PhD in Heritage Studies (Deakin University), a BA (Hons) and an MPhil in Archaeology (University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka). Melathi's research looks at the politicisation of heritage and archaeology in Sri Lanka and other parts of Asia with a focus on the potential of heritage for resilience building in communities recovering from war and other forms of social upheaval. She is an International Member of ICOMOS and is part of the Sri Lanka ICOMOS

National Scientific Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage. She is also co-editor of the *Routledge Handbook of Heritage Destruction* (2023).

Daniel Schumacher, Konstanz, LIVHERE senior researcher (online, Germany)

daniel.schumacher@uni-konstanz.de

Dr. Daniel Schumacher is a historian who works in both the secondary and higher education sectors. He trains future teachers at the Binational School of Education, University of Konstanz (Germany) and serves as Head of History at Schloss Gaienhofen, a nearby private school. Previously, he was a research fellow, network coordinator, and visiting scholar, respectively at the Universities of Hong Kong (CN), Essex (UK), and Notre Dame (US). Daniel's research interests focus on transnational/global and public history, history didactics, and digital education. He has been a long-standing core member of WARMAP and, for over a decade, has been researching 20th century war memory in Asia, its politicization and globalization. He is the co-editor, with Mark R. Frost and Edward Vickers, of *Remembering Asia's World War II* (2019) and, with Stephanie Yeo, of *Exhibiting the Fall of Singapore* (2018). More recently, he co-authored a series of History school textbooks in Germany that now also include major Asian history segments. As part of the LivHERE-project, he explores the role of education in reconciliation processes in post-civil war Sri Lanka.

Sujit Sivasundaram, Cambridge - sps20@cam.ac.uk

Sujit Sivasundaram is Professor of World History at the University of Cambridge and Fellow in History at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He is former Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge, currently a syndic of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and the convener of the university's Consortium for the Global South. Sujit also served on Cambridge University's advisory panel investigating the institution's historical links to slavery. Sujit's research has encompassed the history of science, imperial history, environmental history, cultural history, the history of the Indian Ocean and of the Pacific Ocean, with a regular focus on the 18th and 19th centuries. His most recent book, *Waves Across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire* (2021) won the British Academy Book Prize in 2021 and the Jerry Bentley Book Prize for World History 2022. Sujit is also the author of *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony* (2013).

Neluni Tillekeratne, LIVHERE senior researcher - tillekeratne.neluni@gmail.com

Neluni Tillekeratne has a multi-disciplinary background in the development sector with a recurring focus on government reforms and post-war reconciliation. Neluni currently serves as project manager/research consultant of the LivHERE project. She is the former Head of Research at World Vision Lanka, Co-National Director of Sri Lanka Unites and Sri Lanka consultant for the Centre for International Development at Harvard University. Neluni has also worked with national ministries and local government institutions in all 9 provinces specifically on policy reforms to promote equity in resource allocation. In 2019, she was awarded a Chevening Scholarship by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office to pursue an MSc in Conflict, State-building and Development at the University of Birmingham (UK). Her current research interests include predicting Climate Conflict in Sri Lanka and the effectiveness of peacebuilding movements in the country over several years.

Darshi Thoradeniya, Colombo and LIVHERE co-PI - dnnrdewasiri@history.cmb.ac.lk

Darshi is a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Colombo and a co-PI for the LIVHERE project. She studied at the University of Colombo for her BA History and MA Women's Studies, and completed her PhD in History at the University of Warwick in 2014. Her research interests are in the history of medicine, development studies, women's studies and the history of modern South Asia. Her doctoral thesis examined the strategic place that women's health has played in Sri Lanka's twentieth-century history. Sri Lanka gained prominence in international policy circles as an apparent 'success story' first as a 'model colony' in the early 1950s and later as a 'development model' for South Asia by the 1970s. She has published studies on contraception, health, Sri Lanka's patriarchal welfare state, and development aid in Sri Lanka. For the LIVHERE project, she is collaborating with Nirmal Dewasiri to examine the remembrance of the JVP's violent

heritage, inclusive heritage activism in Sri Lanka's east, and the documentation of the History and Community project (https://arts.cmb.ac.lk/history/?page_id=13).

Edward Vickers, Kyushu & LIVHERE co-PI - edvickers08@googlemail.com

Edward Vickers is Professor of Comparative Education at Kyushu University, Fukuoka (Japan), where he teaches and researches the history and politics of education in contemporary Asia. He also a holder of the UNESCO Chair on Education for Peace, Social Justice and Global Citizenship, which involves a network of international partner institutions across Asia and beyond. He began his career as a teacher in Hong Kong's secondary school system when the territory was transitioning from British to Chinese rule and has since maintained a keen interest in the relationship between education and political socialisation. He spent over a decade working and studying in China (Hong Kong and Beijing) and completed his doctorate at the University of Hong Kong. He is the author and editor of many books on the history and politics of education in contemporary Asia - notably (with Zeng Xiaodong) *Education and Society in Post-Mao China* (2017). He is also an expert in the study of museums and conflict heritage, co-editing, with Mark R. Frost and Daniel Schumacher, the volume *Remembering Asia's World War II* (2019)

Shamara Wettamuny, Oxford and founder of Itihas - shamara.wettimuny@gmail.com

Shamara is a historian who specializes in ethno-religious identity formation and violence during British colonial rule. She completed her doctorate at the University of Oxford, where she was a Beit Scholar. Shamara was the Lead Researcher for the Virtual Museum of Religious Freedom, Sri Lanka, for which she co-developed a training curriculum on history, identity and belonging. She is also the founder of Itihas, a non-profit organisation that works on history education reform in Sri Lanka. Through Itihas, and in partnership with ICES, Shamara has developed a series of workshops to be held for history teachers and university lecturers in Sri Lanka. This series will run from May-September 2023.

Nira Wickramasinghe, Leiden - n.k.wickramasinghe@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Nira Konjit Wickramasinghe is professor of modern South Asian studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands. She was a professor in the department of history and international relations, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, until 2009. She grew up in Paris and studied at the University of Paris IV - Sorbonne from 1981 to 1984 and at the University of Oxford from 1985 to 1989, where she earned her doctorate in modern history. She joined the University of Colombo in 1990 and taught there until 2009. She has been a World Bank Robert McNamara fellow, a Fulbright senior scholar at New York University, a visiting professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and more recently British Academy Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford. She is the author of several works on Sri Lanka history including: *Dressing the Colonized Body: Politics, Clothing and Identity in Sri Lanka* (2003); *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History* (2006); *Metallic Modern: Everyday Machines in Colonial Sri Lanka* (2014); and *Slave in a Palanquin: Colonial Servitude and Resistance in Sri Lanka* (2020)

GUESTS

Viyanga Gunasekera, ICES (online, melbourne) - viyanga.ices@gmail.com

Viyanga Gunasekera is a Researcher at ICES and has an MPhil in Psychology from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Her ongoing research involves land ownership and women's empowerment; pathways to grassroots women's representation in politics; social inclusion and exclusion; reimagining vulnerability in the Covid-19 context; and wellbeing of vulnerable groups of people in Sri Lanka.

Phusathi Liyanaarachchi, AILS - phusathi.ails@gmail.com

Phusathi is a Programme Officer at The American Institute for Lankan Studies (AILS). She assists with various programme activities, including virtual seminars, workshops, website resources, and digitization initiatives. Her research interests include Comparative Literatures, Religious Studies and South Asian Studies with a

focus on psychoanalysis, femininities, pre-modern literatures and literary theory. She holds a B.A. (Hons) English from the University of Colombo Sri Lanka. She is also affiliated with the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka as an editor and translator.

Yorim Spoelder, Freie Universität Berlin - yorim.spoelder@fu-berlin.de

Yorim Spoelder is a postdoctoral research fellow at Freie Universität Berlin. He previously held various fellowships at Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg, Freie Universität Berlin and the Graduate Institute, Geneva, was a guest scholar at EHESS Paris, and affiliated as a researcher with the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. He currently works on a comparative study of colonial cosmopolitanisms in Asian metropolises across the Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, French and British imperial spheres.

Nadine Vanniasinka, ICES - nadine.ices@gmail.com

Nadine Vanniasinkam is a researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies Sri Lanka. She has a Masters in Applied Linguistics from the University of Melbourne, Australia and a BA (Hons) in English Literature from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her research interests include inter-religious relations and conflict, nationalism and minority identity politics with gender as a crosscutting focus. Nadine is currently coordinating a project that uses the arts to promote reconciliation and is conducting research on the music and song traditions of Sri Lanka's ethnic minorities.

Ramla Wahab-Salman, Executive Director AILS - ramlaw.ails@gmail.com

Ramla Wahab-Salman is a researcher in the field of Islam in South Asia and holds a Masters degree in History (South Asia) from SOAS, London and a Bachelors (Hons). degree in History from Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. Ramla's Masters' dissertation research was titled 'Sonahar, an exploration of Moor language in Ceylon'. She has spoken at the Galle Literary Festival on the Bittersweet Histories of the Muslims of South-West Sri Lanka, and produced a documentary film supported by the Prince Salie Foundation on *Prince Salie: A Story of Sapphires and Steamships*. Ramla has previously handled roles in research and administration with the British Museum, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies and the Samkathana Research Archive, University of Kelaniya.