

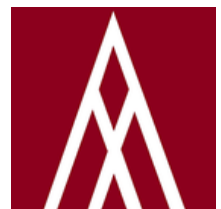


MARGA INSTITUTE



ANNUAL REPORT

2022/2023





CONTENTS



03

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

04

EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN'S
REPORT

05

PERFORMANCE OF MARGA
INSTITUTE DURING THE YEAR
UNDER REVIEW

06

INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES

07

OUR WORK

08

OUR FLAGSHIP PROJECT –
DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES

12

OUR WORK WITH LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

13

OUR WORK CONCERNING
CLIMATE CHANGE

16

OUR WORK PROMOTING OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES POLICY

17

EVENTS

18

WAY FORWARD

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As the country grapples with the vulnerability fallout of the pandemic and economic crisis, the challenge of leaving no one behind is ever more critical and urgent. It seems that the complex issues of human development challenges are continuing to be addressed in an ad hoc and fragmented manner.

Evaluations and assessments continue to focus on the aggregate to the neglect of the diversity of the local situations where people must work out their solutions. System change is becoming ever more elusive, especially with the conceptual confusion arising from holding on to the past when the systems must change in order to move forward.

This is the challenge.



MR ASOKA GUNAWARDENA
CHAIRMAN, MARGA INSTITUTE

EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year under review was hectic and demanding under trying economic conditions. Our staff of 12 managed eight projects, out of which five were completed during the financial year. We embarked on work in the area of Climate Change and continued our research on social cohesion and language rights. Our staff and researchers have gained much knowledge and experience in these sectors through Marga's work during the last five years.

We were privileged to work with the National Languages Equality Advancement Project, UNDP, Asia Foundation and Gamani Corea Foundation. The project value of secured assignments during the year under review decreased marginally from Rs. 60,992,167/= to Rs. 56,737,297/=. However, our Project income (completed) decreased from Rs. 39,250,611 /= (2021/2022) to Rs. 29,661,152/= during the year under review. Yet, cash received from ongoing projects increased from Rs. 15 million in the previous year to Rs. 22 million and receivable income from ongoing projects also increased from Rs. 17 million to Rs. 25 million.

I am happy to announce that we have recommenced our programme "Development Dialogues" after several decades thanks to Grant Funding from the Asia Foundation. We partnered with six CSOs in Kalutara, Mannar and Trincomalee Districts. Our research staff conducted two rounds of dialogues in each of the villages during the year.

A significant initiative of Marga's research commenced during the year when – in addition to dominantly externally funded research- Marga commenced a series of "independent research" with minimum cost on some significant social issues, which received wide social and media coverage. The impact of the economic crisis on housewives, the self-employed and farmers, and the system change that was a demand of youth are some of the ongoing inquiries. We have also established a network of Field Researchers who received intensive training in general research and will have continuous training to enhance their skills in modern and innovative research methodologies and tools.

We also had four research presentations of completed Marga research projects and organised three Seminars during the last year.

In addition, our staff underwent significant training during the year under review. I would like to thank the University of South Carolina- Rule of Law Collaborative for their support and Strategic Inspiration for facilitating eight training programmes for our research staff and finance executive during the year.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman and the rest of the Board of Governors, Mrs Perera in particular, for all the guidance and support extended to me and the Marga Team, without which we could not have achieved our goals for the year.



AMAR GUNATILLEKE

EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN, MARGA INSTITUTE

PERFORMANCE OF MARGA INSTITUTE DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Our Annual Turnover decreased by 14 %

2021/2022 = 45,690,992/=

2022/2023 = 39,285,153/=

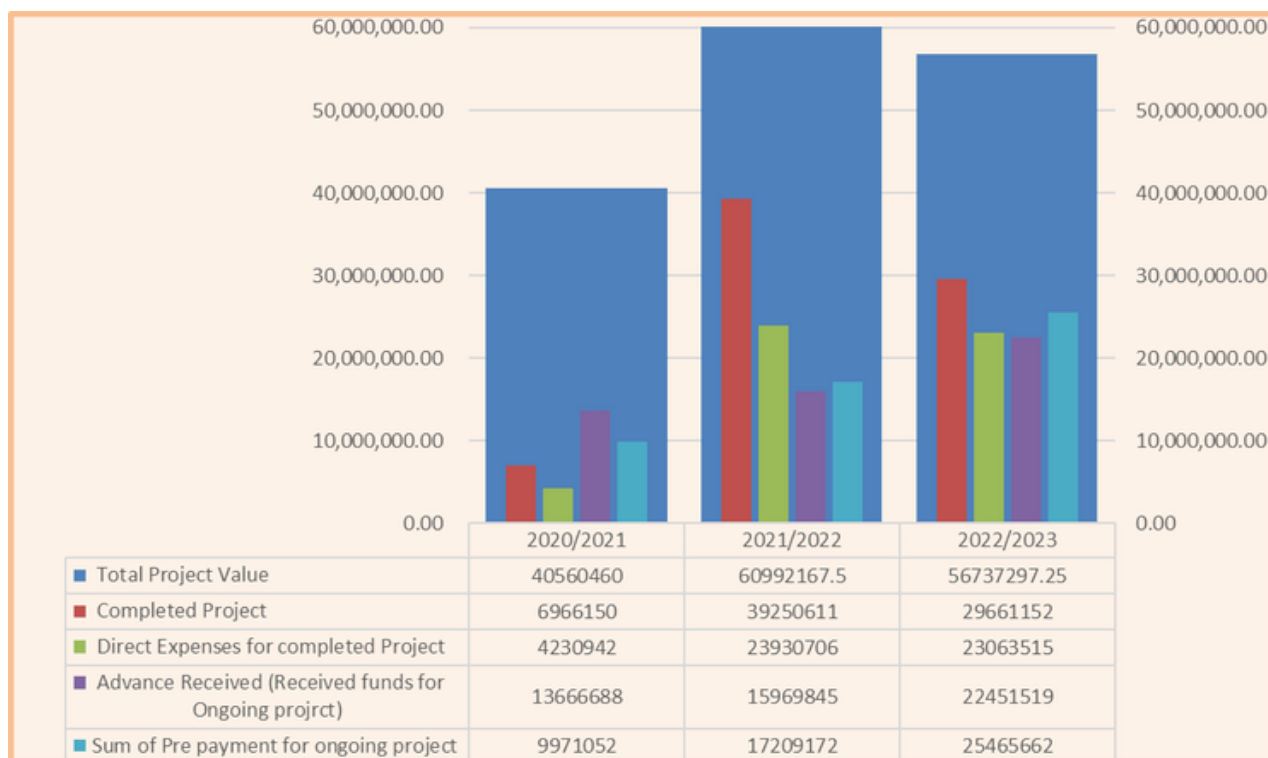
Our project income decreased

2021/2022 = Rs. 39,250,611 /=

2022/2023 = Rs. 29,661,152/=

Net income (surplus) for 2021/2022 - Rs. 9,147,547

Net income (surplus) for 2022/2023 - Rs. 1,393,091



INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES

The income from fixed deposits increased even as interest rates increased during the year. There was a marginal decrease in rent income as one of the Tenants had not settled the rent for two months as of 31st March 2023.

Income from the Auditorium increased by 134%. Due to Grant Funding for staff salaries and administration costs, the income generated as coordination fees increased from Rs. 185,435/= in the previous year to Rs. 1,248,958/= in the year under review.

Other Income Sources	2021/2022	2022/2023
Income from Fixed Deposit	Rs.1,833,285.00	Rs.4,968,981.00
Rent	Rs.2,859,105.00	Rs.2,659,350.00
Publications	Rs.15,219.00	Rs.11,050.00
Auditorium	Rs.158,250.00	Rs.371,175.00
Marga Coordination	Rs.185,435.00	Rs.1,248,958.00

OUR WORK

Projects obtained before the financial year and completed in the 2022-2023 period.

1. Language Rights through Cultural Traditions (June 2021- June 2022)
2. The Marga study on Female Labour Force Participation for Gamani Corea Foundation (March 2021- November 2022)

New Assignments and Projects completed in 2022-2023

1. Implementing an Advocacy and Communication Campaign 2022 for the Climate Promise Project for UNDP (August – December 2022)
2. Measuring and Responding to National Languages compliance of Provincial Public authorities in the North, East, North-western and Uva provinces in Sri Lanka for UNDP (July to December 2022)
3. Monitoring Online and Offline Media Platforms to assess their impact on minority communities in Sri Lanka for UNDP (June to November 2022)

Assignments obtained before the financial year and are ongoing.

1. Formulation of SDG Mainstreamed Mid-Term Development Plans for selected 6 Municipal Councils and 6 Urban Councils in North, North Central, Eastern and Uva Provinces for UNDP (October 2021- October 2023)

Projects and Assignments obtained during the financial year and are ongoing

1. Building social cohesion through Development Dialogues (by designing sustainable solutions for all community groups.) for Asia Foundation (June 2022 to August 2023)
2. Mapping of data collection, analysis and dissemination capacity of key justice sector institutions in Sri Lanka for UNDP – March 2023 to September

Independent Research of Marga Institute

1. Public Opinion on “System Change”
2. The impact of the economic crisis on households (ongoing)
3. The status of Small and Medium Enterprises (ongoing)
4. Status of Farmers (Exploratory survey)

OUR FLAGSHIP PROJECT – DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES

It has been the passion of Marga Institute to recommence Development Dialogues, a programme of work that the Institute was engaged in in the 1970s and early 1980s. However, lack of funding prevented the Institute from resuming this programme. We wish to thank Asia Foundation for the grant funding that has made it possible for Marga Institute to embark on a programme where we strengthened social cohesion through Development Dialogues. The 10-month Asia Foundation /Marga programme "Together for Development" was designed to bring all communities together in selected villages in Kalutara, Mannar, and Trincomalee Districts to plan a practical, manageable project to solve an identified development issue.

The Institute decided to work closely with Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partners of Asia Foundation, currently working on social cohesion in the selected districts. The Marga Team and the Asia Foundation shortlisted and selected the following CSOs to coordinate and facilitate the "Development Dialogues". The CSOs were asked to select a village with a mix of ethnic, religious or income classes for the dialogues.

Kalutara

1. Community Oriented Resource Exchange (CORE) - Bogodakanda
2. Organization of Environment and Children Rights Preservation (OECRP)- Kuda Arukgoda

Mannar

1. Humanitarian Development Organization (HDO)- Poomalanthan
2. Organization of People for Engagement and Enterprise (OPENE)- Anthonyapuram

Trincomalee

1. Child Development Fund (CDF)- China Bay
2. Rural Economic and Community Development Organization (RECD)- Kappalthurai

Representatives of the CSOs were trained to collect data and to conduct the "Development Dialogues" at a two-day workshop in Colombo. The Institute engaged directly with the community in two rounds during the year under review, where initially, problems and opportunities to develop the village were identified to strengthen social cohesion horizontally. Thereafter, the community was connected with respective public officials to support vertically. Notably, due to this intervention, communities began to realise how effectively the village could be developed when they came together. Marga Researchers, too, realised that the community was unaware of the role of public officials at the village level in advising and supporting to resolve their issues or solve their problems.

This programme will continue with grant funding from the Asia Foundation.

OUR FLAGSHIP PROJECT – DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES



We signed a memorandum of understanding with the Community Oriented Resource Exchange (CORE) in Kalutara to partner with them to carry out our Development Dialogues Programme in Bogodakande Kalutara.

Our team at Kuda Arukgoda in the Bandaragama Divisional Secretariat in the Kalutara District discussed development and social cohesion with community leaders.



Our partner, Human Development Organisation (HDO) in Mannar, conducted a survey in Poomalanthan to determine how communities are coping with the current economic crisis and the rising cost of living.

OUR FLAGSHIP PROJECT – DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES

Marga Team at CDF
office in Trincomalee
discussing the work
plan for development
Dialogues.



The training and planning
workshop for CSO partners
was held in Colombo to
conduct development
Dialogues in Kalutara,
Mannar and Trincomalee.
Additionally, we trained the
CSOs on negotiating skills.

The Marga research
team at Trincomalee
conducted the initial
development
dialogues at
Kappalthurai Village.



OUR FLAGSHIP PROJECT – DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUES



A little volleyball with the community at China Bay will keep us healthy.

Development
Dialogues at Balagala,
Bogodakanda in
Walallawita DS
division



Community Groups
discussed what they could
do together.

OUR WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

SDG MAINSTREAMED MID-TERM PLANS FOR SELECTED 12 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

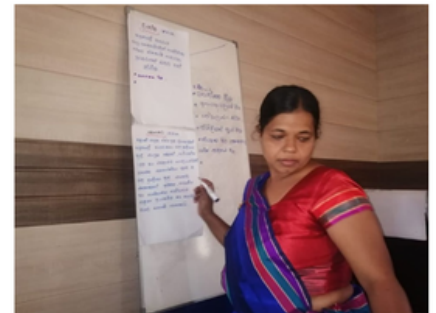
Marga is breaking new ground in formulating SDG mainstreamed mid-term plans for 12 Local Government Authorities in the Northern, Eastern, North Central and Uva Provinces. Unfortunately, due to many challenges, we could not complete the assignment by the end of February 2023. Writing out Results Frameworks for the first six Local Government Authorities, where we had completed all workshops in June 2022, took us more time than envisaged. This was the most demanding part of obtaining information.

The information required for the Draft Mid-Term Plans also took considerable time to collect, making the team go back and forth for clarifications. There were also delays in scheduling the Vision workshops for the Northern and Eastern provinces. Getting dates from Local Government Authorities for Vision workshops has been very challenging as they were busy with their yearend work.



Workshop on vision and trust areas conducted at Ampara

Workshop at Haputale Urban Council on vision and thrust areas.



Jaffna Municipal Council



The workshop for council members of Trincomalee Urban Council on Results Based Framework. This workshop was delayed because of road closures resulting from protests.

OUR WORK CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE

The UNDP assigned the Marga Institute to Implement an Advocacy and Communication Campaign for Climate Promise. The overall objective of this assignment was to provide consultative and operational services to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to develop and implement a rapid Communication Strategy to lobby and advocate stakeholders on transforming the enhanced NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) into concrete actions.

A pre-identified outreach programme titled '**Implementing an Advocacy and Communication Campaign 2022 for the Climate Promise Project**' was carried out with deliverables based on items indicated in the RFP.

Some of the Facebook posts created by the communications team



Some of the Facebook posts created by the communications team



Some of the Facebook posts created by the communications team

The advocacy and communication campaign aimed to create a broader awareness of climate change and its impacts and encourage policy dialogue by advocating the implementation of enhanced NDCs amongst the general public and policymakers. Key Messages were advocated across different platforms by employing multiple audio/visual communication mediums, such as electronic media, social media and print media, using simple language to enable all audiences to understand.

The messages were developed in concurrence with the Climate Change Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment and the UNDP within the framework of the UNFCCC while adhering to UNDP visibility guidelines and standards.

OUR WORK CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE

Campaign elements

1. A one-and-a-half-hour recorded TV talk show on ITN (Doramadalawa programme).
 2. One-hour recorded radio talk show in Sinhala on Lakhada
 3. Seven-minute documentary for social media
 4. Five-minute documentary for Children
 5. Twenty-one short-duration videos (Eight videos in English, Sinhala and Tamil) for Social Media
 6. A Photo- Essay published in the Newspaper.
 7. Three-minute video for youth on the “pulse” platform.
 8. Full-page advertorial published in the weekend newspapers.
 9. Full-page Children’s Day awareness publication.
- World Children’s Day - Children’s Day art competition on Facebook



Some of the Facebook posts created by the communications team



Radio Programmes



TV Programme

OUR WORK CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE



Winning submissions to the art
competition



Newspaper articles

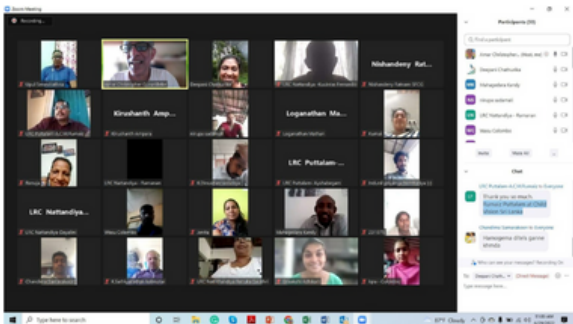


OUR WORK PROMOTING OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY WORK

A Zoom discussion was conducted with 30 key members of OLP (Official Languages Policy) Promotion Associations established in Ampara, Colombo, Kandy, Puttalam and Vavuniya Districts. We discussed the current situation and the space available to promote Official Language Policy in today's economic and socio-political context. Also, we deliberated about how public issues related to language could be resolved.

- Issues concerning the shortage of bilingual officers even in areas demarcated as bilingual and the absence of applications in all three languages in some of the public institutions in Puttalam District,
- Direction boards on buses not in both official languages in Vavuniya, thus causing inconvenience to commuters, were discussed with the Official Languages Commission.
- Furthermore, it was noted that citizens in Ampara and Puttalam face problems concerning official documents (mistakes in the case of documents in Tamil).
- Citizens in Ampara and Vavuniya face difficulties when making statements at the police stations. Charge sheets are still prepared only in Sinhala.

At a time when Sri Lanka needs to be united, we must resolve these language issues.



Responses concerning the video.

The Institute spoke to persons who came for job interviews (over 30 persons), village communities who are part of Marga Development Dialogues at Kalutara, Mannar, Trincomalee Districts (06 villages), Language Societies in Colombo, Puttalam, Kandy, Vavuniya, and Ampara and Marga Associates to obtain viewer response. Over 60% have seen the video, and they spoke positively about it. It appears that they have understood the main idea behind it. However, some had not heard about the Official Languages Policy before.

The Marga Institute carried out a media campaign on Sirasa TV, Shakthi TV and Social Media in January / February 2023 to create awareness concerning the Official Languages Policy. The campaign consisted of two videos, which were 15 seconds in duration, and interviews with the Chairman of the Official Languages Commission, which were 5 minute and two-minute videos. The key message or the question we posed to the public through the campaign was, "How unfair is it if one cannot transact in their mother tongue in their country?"

According to campaign analysis, the videos reached 1,011,450 persons on social media and had 6,428,634 impressions, 4,240,624 video engagements, and 1,210,753 post engagements.



EVENTS

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

We had several research presentations during the year under purview. Our research studies and surveys for UNDP and Gamani Corea Foundation were highlighted among partner organisations, Civil Society and other stakeholders.

We presented our findings of the Marga survey (conducted for UNDP) on compliance with the Official Languages Policy at selected Provincial Public authorities in the North, East, North-western and Uva provinces in Sri Lanka.

Officials from the Official Languages Commission, Department of Official Languages (Two Commissioners), National Institute of Language Education and Training and National Languages Division of the Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government attended the workshop. A lively workshop followed the presentation.



EVENTS

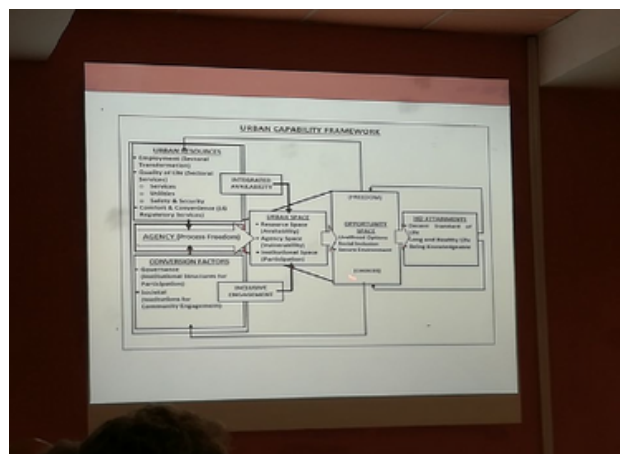
RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS



We presented our survey findings on the Effects of Hate Speech on Minority Groups in Sri Lanka to Civil Society Organisations. Dr. Gehan Gunatilleke commented on the findings and suggested future research and interventions. A workshop facilitated by Adrian Ferdinands followed the presentation. The event was supported by UNDP.



The picture below shows the presentation of the Marga Study on Urbanization (funded by the Gamani Corea Foundation) and a brainstorming session with subject specialists and directors of the Gamani Corea Foundation. The Lead researcher and Chairman of the Institute, Mr Asoka Gunawardena, presented the findings.



EVENTS

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Presentation of the Marga Study on "Female Labour Force Participation in Sri Lanka" was at the Marga Auditorium, which was well attended by a few Governing Council Members of the Marga Institute, Representatives from Asia Foundation, GIZ, CEYPA, and other research institutions. The study was funded by the Gamani Corea Foundation. Mrs Myrtle Perera, Vice Chairperson and Lead Researcher of the Study on Female Labour Force Participation, presented the findings.



Professor Tilak Abeysinghe, Research Director of Gamani Corea Foundation, and Amar Gunatilleke, Chief Executive Officer of Marga Institute, moderated the discussion.

SEMINARS AND THINK TANK DISCUSSIONS



We had our first Think Tank Discussion on "Debt Restructuring and Way Forward" in March 2023 – Dr Ahilan Kadirgamar, Professor Sirimevan Colombage, and Mr Ranel Wijesinha made presentations. Recordings were uploaded on the Marga YouTube channel.

EVENTS

POLICY CONVERSATION ON EDUCATION REFORMS IN SRI LANKA.

The Institute jointly organised a Seminar on Education Reforms with Hype Sri Lanka at the Marga Institute in September 2022.

Mr. Jeremy de Zilwa, Director of Hype Sri Lanka; Dr Sujata Gamage, co-chair of the Education Forum and Senior Research Fellow at LIRNEasia; Dr Harini Amarasuriya, Member of Parliament of Sri Lanka, National People's Power, and Marga Institute made presentations at the Seminar.

OTHER EVENTS PROMOTING THE WORK OF MARGA PEACE DAY EVENT AT THULHIRIYA



We participated in the Peace Day celebrations at MAS Athena in Thulhiriya hosted by the Youth Community Leadership Initiative (YCLI) and the implementing partners WHO, UNDP, UNV and NYSC. We conducted a survey among youth who attended the Peace Day Celebrations.

We engaged with youth at the Peace Village at Thulhiriya and spoke about language rights and official language policy.



EVENTS

STAFF TRAINING

A training workshop on “Improving Research Quality” was organised by Strategic Inspirations for Marga staff. The training programme was part of the Think Tank Capacity Building Programme supported by the Rule of Law Collaborative of the University of South Carolina. Professor Tudor Silva and Mr Mangala Fernando were the leading trainers and facilitators.



The picture below shows the training programme conducted by Mr Amitha Amarasinghe on social media monitoring for Marga Researchers.



Other training programmes that the Marga research and finance staff obtained during the year under purview were: -

- Action Research Innovations with Advocacy Applications
- Foundations of Communications, Advocacy, and Crisis Management (standing out in the digital world)
- Writing Proposals for Grants
- Workshop on Qualitative Methods
- Online research: Tools, tips, techniques
- Social Media Monitoring and Organic Reach Optimisation
- System Thinking

TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR FIELD STAFF

We brought down 16 persons from our outstation network to Marga for an orientation and training workshop on Development Dialogues and data collection to establish our new field research network.

Young persons from Anuradhapura, Ampara, Batticaloa, Gampaha, Matale, Kegalle, Kurunegala, Kalutara, Kandy, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee attended the full-day workshop.



WAY FORWARD

The Institute envisages working closely with Grass Root and Civil Society Organisations at the local level to conduct participatory and action research. The knowledge and experience we have gained through working with local government authorities is an area that the Institute can undoubtedly leverage. “Development Dialogues” and village studies will be the mainstay of the Marga work programme. The Institute will re-visit the “Village Studies” programme by going back to the villages it studied during the 1970s and to track the path of development during the last five decades.

In addition to the above, the Institute will also engage in independent research on topical issues, thus living up to the Credo of the Marga Institute – Staying in touch. The success rate of the Marga Research Team in securing assignments and projects through competitive bidding has been quite impressive. However, the approach of the Institute going forward will be to obtain long-term and medium-term research grants.

Disseminating the findings of Marga Research to a broader audience is very much on the agenda.

Researching social cohesion will be a specific area that Marga Institute will continue, whilst initial environment and climate change-related assignments obtained in recent times may be used to bolster our credentials for new research opportunities to understand the nexus between social cohesion, resource-based conflict resolution and climate change.

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