

Dear Colleagues,

Greeting and welcome to our newsletter, a monthly update on what UNV Sri Lanka is doing on promotion of volunteerism for peace and development.



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UNV SRI LANKA 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Despite the unprecedented challenges during the year 2020, we continued contributing to peace and development through volunteerism, thanks to our selfless UN Volunteers and partners. Here we share key highlights of our 2020 activities to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, contributions to sustainable development and efforts to inspire others to volunteer.

Highlight 1. Training Youth Leaders



Early in the year, UNV under the PBF Project in collaboration with Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena trained 40 youth from various parts of the country in leadership, peacebuilding and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under Training of Trainers (TOTs) from various parts of the country. For more information, click [here](#).

Highlight 2. UNVs in COVID-19 responses



UN Volunteers serving with different UN Agencies in Sri Lanka supported the UN's and government's response to COVID-19. Read stories of [Abdul](#), [Anjalee](#) and [Chanaka](#).

Highlight 3. Volunteerism of Sri Lanka at GTM2020



In Sri Lanka, volunteerism plays a vital role in various aspects in the society. The Government of Sri Lanka has identified volunteerism as a core value that should be encouraged in the country through a state mechanism to expand and regularize volunteerism throughout the country.

Ashoka Alawatte
Secretary
Ministry of Social Security, Sri Lanka



At the Global Technical Meeting (GTM) 2020, Mrs Ashoka Alawatte, Secretary of the Ministry of Social Security Sri Lanka, highlighted the critical role of volunteerism in Sri Lankan society and the Government's support on the volunteer sector in collaboration with UNV Sri Lanka. Watch the recording [here](#).

Highlight 4.

UN Volunteers featured at the UN75 commemorative event



Video messages from four UN Volunteers from Sri Lanka were featured during the UN75 Commemorative Event organized by ESCAP and UN RCO Thailand. They shared their experience and views about the future they envision and how volunteers can contribute to sustainable development during the decade of action. Watch the videos of [Sam](#), [Kasunjith](#), [Niels](#), and [Dinithi](#).

Highlight 5. Progress in the National Volunteering Secretariat (NVS)

In December, the draft Act of the National Volunteering Secretariat of Sri Lanka compiled with the support of UNV was formally forwarded to the Legal Department of the Ministry of Health by the Director of Department of Social Services for guidance on further action required prior to submission to the Legal Draftsman's Department of the Government.

#IVD2020 Highlights



UNV Sri Lanka celebrated five days of volunteerism starting from 1st December hosting **a series of webinars** in the build-up to International Volunteer Day. On 5th December, UNV in collaboration with WHO and other partners hosted **a virtual celebration** to recognize and appreciate the millions of volunteers and frontline functionaries across the country for their exemplary and courageous efforts in response to COVID-19 crisis. This event brought together over 170 participants on Zoom and another 800+ joining through FB.

All UNV Sri Lanka IVD activities can be viewed [here](#).

VOLUNTEER ACTION COUNTS

Reimagining Volunteering in the Decade of Action

Every day, millions of individuals across the planet engage in volunteer actions supporting development initiatives in order to improve conditions for others and for themselves, their families and communities. However, the full picture of volunteering is complex and often hidden as most volunteering is spontaneous, often times it is individual actions in response to a need which are hard to capture with a tendency to focus on formal and full-time volunteers.



From early/mid-November to IVD, UNV facilitated the publishing of **a series of articles** in the local newspapers around the subject of volunteerism featuring authors from volunteer organisations, WHO Sri Lanka, academia and UNV.

- [“Rotaract” gears to bring the talents and skills of our youth to a greater stage, November 8 2020](#)
- [Volunteer Action Counts, November 15 2020](#)
- [Social Aspects of volunteering in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka, November 29 2020](#)
- [Reimagining Volunteering in the Decade of Action, December 6 2020](#)

Instagram Takeover

While managing UNV Sri Lanka's Instagram account for a day, a UN Volunteer and a V-Force volunteer shared their volunteer experiences and responded to questions coming in from followers.

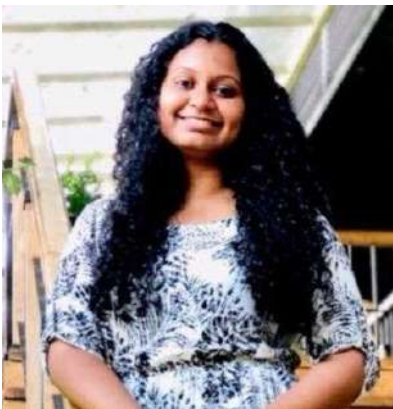


See UN Volunteer Afraa's IG Takeover [here](#)



See V-Force volunteer Giaksha's IG Takeover [here](#)

Farewell & Thank You



"My experience as a UN Volunteer at the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka has been transformative and expanded my knowledge and perspectives. The experiences I gained and the people I worked with have truly helped me better myself. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve as a UN Volunteer and contribute towards upholding and safeguarding human rights in Sri Lanka. Many thanks to everyone for all the support. May everyone be safe and healthy!"

Samya Senaratne
Research and Coordinating Assistant - UNDP

"Although my term as a UNV was quite short, I gained a lot of exposure while working for the

Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. I was fortunate to be blessed with amazing colleagues and it redefined my life as a whole. I thank all the wonderful people who supported me to make this a wonderful experience. Stay happy and safe!!”

Kalpanee Dissanayake

Inquiring and Investigations Assistant - UNDP



“Serving as a UN Volunteer at the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka has been a memorable journey with a lot of experience and exposure gained. It was a privilege to work with great mentors who inspired us in many ways. While I'm thankful for all the great opportunities I received during my assignment, I also take pride in the opportunity given to me to make a valuable contribution to my country through the promotion and protection of human rights and good governance.

A heartfelt thanks to my supervisors and colleagues for all the guidance and support! Warm wishes for the new year!”

Sajida Fazal

Media Coordinator – UNDP

“While working as a humanitarian worker for more than 17 years, I have been engaged in many humanitarian projects. I see the UNV programme as an excellent platform for the junior international civil servants to excel their career and seniors and the most seniors to re-engage with their unfinished professional journey in supporting to resolve diverse humanitarian issues in the world.”



K. M. Chandra Kumara



Welcome to the UNV Family



"I am eager to begin working as a UN Volunteer at the World Food Programme, supporting the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network. This opportunity and community will allow me to hone my skills and help nurture a nutrition-sensitive private sector to drive our common mandate."

Akanksha Hulangamuwa
SUN Business Network Support Assistant - WFP

"I am excited to work with the Policy and Engagement Team at the UNDP. This will be a great learning experience for me. I sincerely hope I can meaningfully add to the incredible work that the team has already laid out."

Nadhia Najeeb
Policy Research and Engagement Assistant - UNDP



Keep updated our latest news!



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