

# Newsletter

March 2021



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## Women in Leadership & Volunteerism

In celebration of International Women's Day (IWD2021), we have been highlighting **women's contributions to volunteerism and social change** with a number of content.



In Sri Lanka, a significant number of female UN Volunteers served UN Agencies during 2020. They played important roles in contributing towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and some of them joined forces to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Let's commend and recognize their talent, passion and contributions.

My message is for parents to educate all their daughters. This is important to ensure women in leadership.

UN Volunteer Sumaiya Iqbal  
UNICEF Sri Lanka



The UNV Regional Office in Asia and the Pacific featured the voices of female UN Volunteers in the region. Sumaiya Iqbal who served as a Data Management Support Associate with UNICEF Sri Lanka says "as women & girls what we can do is to believe in ourselves and keep walking."

Read more



Dilini Ekanayake who served at UNICEF as a Volunteer Coordinator says "as women, let's encourage each other to take on more responsibilities to follow our passion and to better ourselves as leaders to make this world a better place".

Watch the video

## # Herstory in Volunteering

#HerstoryInVolunteering #LKA #ActForEqual  
**The late Mrs. Pearl Stephen**  
Founder of Women's Development Centre in Maligampola • V-Awards Finalist in 2011



Her volunteer efforts over the decades changed the lives of women and children who were abused and lived under hardships.

She was not only a women's rights activist but also a mentor for these women to become successful in their day-to-day lives.

UN VOLUNTEERS Sri Lanka

#HerstoryInVolunteering #LKA #ActForEqual  
**Araliya Abeysekera**  
Volunteer at the National Institute of Mental Health • V-Awards Finalist in 2013



Her sympathy for fellow human beings has driven her to strive to change the common stereotypes people have of those experiencing mental health difficulties.

Through her compassion and selfless efforts, Araliya has managed to show that people with mental health difficulties have rights like everyone else that they need love and affection.

UN VOLUNTEERS Sri Lanka

#HerstoryInVolunteering #LKA #ActForEqual  
**Ms. Lakshmi Ratnayake**  
First Chairperson Sri Lanka Sumithrayo & Founder and Director of the 'Rural Programme' • V-Awards Finalist in 2011



Giving hope to silent and inconsolable hearts to look at pain through a positive light, Ms. Lakshmi Ratnayake has been the heart and soul of Sumithrayo's efforts in counseling services to prevent the extreme effects of those suffering from personal difficulties.

UN VOLUNTEERS Sri Lanka

#HerstoryInVolunteering #LKA #ActForEqual  
**The late Thilaka de Kretser**  
Director of Pithipura Communities • V-Awards Finalist in 2013



The late Thilaka de Kretser shed lights on the difficulties faced by families of persons with disabilities and provided residential care giving facilities to support them through the enhancement of their own strengths and abilities.

Her life time commitment and love nurtured and enabled them to live a life with dignity and confidence.

UN VOLUNTEERS Sri Lanka

#HerstoryInVolunteering #LKA #ActForEqual  
**Ms. Sharmini Perera**  
Founder of the 'Home of Hope' • V-Awards Finalist in 2011



The aftermath of the conflict made Sharmini think of the children left destitute when they lost their parents and dedicate her life to help those in need.

Sharmini's true spirit of volunteerism and her motherly love towards the children has turned them into beautiful personalities with self-worth, confidence and dignity.

UN VOLUNTEERS Sri Lanka

#HerstoryInVolunteering #LKA #ActForEqual  
**Kamani De Silva**  
Nurse • V-Awards Finalist in 2013



Nurse Kamani de Silva is one rare individual who has devoted her life to bringing beacons to so many people as she could.

Her tireless efforts to bring a better and more comfortable environment for the cancer patients and her genuine concern for the wellbeing of them and her fellow colleagues, makes her a true role model not just as a nursing officer but more so as a human being.

UN VOLUNTEERS Sri Lanka

To highlight contributions of female volunteers in the country, the stories of V-Awards finalists from previous editions have been featured in our social media campaign 'Herstory in Volunteering'. The stories of these passionate women who devoted their time to help others in the community are inspiring and noteworthy. Read their stories on our [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

# The Symposium of Synergizing Youth Volunteers



Source: 'Leo Multiple District 306 , Sri Lanka' Facebook Page

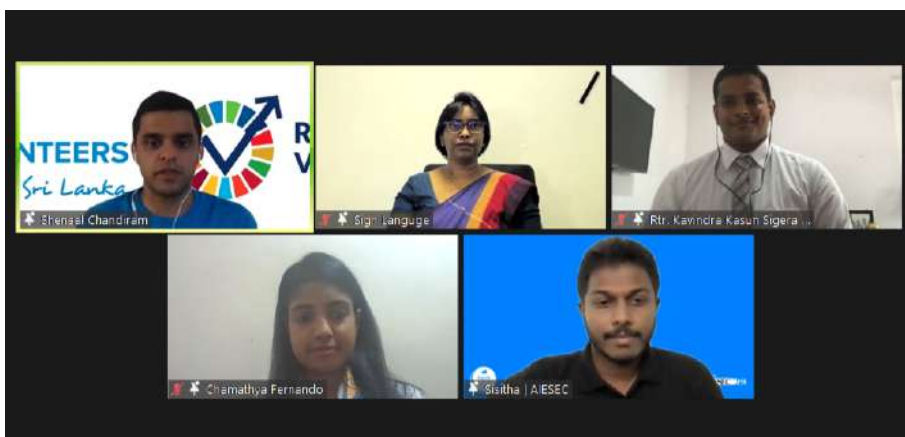
The UNV Country Coordinator, Sharmalee Jayasinghe was invited as a guest speaker to the 'Symposium of Synergizing Youth Volunteers' organized by the Leos of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports on 8th February.

During the ensuing panel discussion 'Building Next Generation of Leader', she shared insights on the benefits of volunteering, the importance of volunteerism in contributing to the development of the country and in achieving SDGs, the work of UNV Sri Lanka and key contributions to the country including policy support and the importance of recognizing volunteers in the country.

[Watch the recording of the Symposium](#)

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## The National Youth Dialogue (NYD) on Leadership, Innovation & Entrepreneurship



[The National Youth Dialogue 2020/2021](#) (NYD) on Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship is an annual national youth engagement exercise led by UNDP Sri Lanka. This year's NYD held from 16 February to 18 March, UNV Sri Lanka and UN Volunteers contributed by discussing youth volunteerism and sharing knowledge and skills.

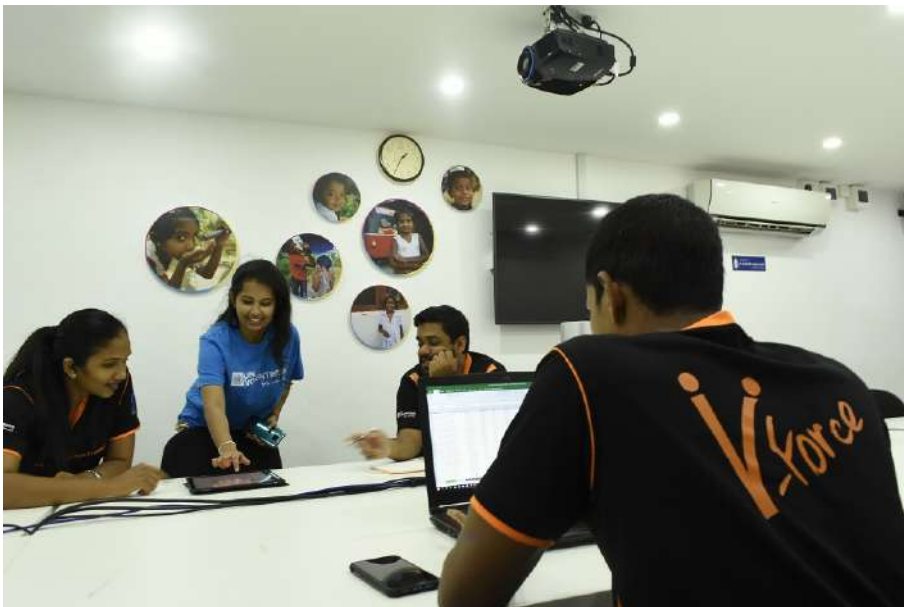
During the third week of the NYD, UN Youth Volunteers Oshan and Soyeon hosted a session on how to develop online learning skills. They shared their knowledge and experience and introduced a variety of tools to enhance students' e-learning.

On 9th March, UN Volunteer Shenaal from UNV Sri Lanka presented on the 2030 Agenda and the role of volunteerism in achieving the 17 SDGs. During the discussion, the speakers invited from Volunteering Involving Organisations discussed various topics around youth volunteerism - the critical roles of young volunteers in the Decade of Action, benefits of volunteering engagement to youth, and envisioning the future of youth volunteerism.

***"Volunteering inculcates young people with a sense of shared values such as responsibility and empathy, as well as a sense of ownership that enables them to speak out and take actions."***

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**UN Volunteers and V-Force  
Joining Forces to support the COVID  
Vaccination in Sri Lanka**



UN Volunteers together with V-Force provided key support to UNICEF in gathering vital information and data around the cold chain facilities in the country in preparation for the COVID vaccinations. This included Cold Chain Equipment Inventory (CCEI) data collection, validation and documentation. Two UN Volunteers together with twenty-three V-Force volunteers successfully contributed the CCEI Data Collection of UNICEF and the Ministry of Health facilitating this important national initiative. This story will be featured on **World Health Day on 7th April**. Stay tuned!

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## Farewell & Thank You



*"As I leave, I like to take this opportunity to thank the great team of UNV Sri Lanka for your collaboration and friendship. It was a pleasant encounter and an assignment. Probably the least stressed time during my entire engagement in the UN so far. Thank you for making my time counted. I wish all of you nothing but the best! Much Love, Ereesha."*

**Ereesha De Silva**  
**Project Operations Coordinator- UNV**

*"After working in the private sector for over 18 years, the rare opportunity that I received to work*

as a UNV with UNICEF to coordinate the medical & PPE supplies to the Ministry of Health turned out to be one of the most fulfilling and rewarding work experiences in my life. It truly let me experience first-hand UNV and UNICEF's inspirational work done for the communities' goodwill and well-being across our country.

The spirit of volunteerism that this UNV assignment helped me internalize will live on with me, and I am deeply thankful to the entire UNV team that supported me throughout this assignment.”



**Chanaka Unantenne**  
Project Coordinator (Supply) - UNICEF

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## Welcome to the UNV Family!



"I am grateful for the valuable opportunity given to me by the UN Volunteers Programme to support the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its role as the Coordinator and Secretariat of the UN Network on Migration in Sri Lanka. I enjoy this inter-agency work and learning opportunity. This is my second assignment and approaching three years as a UNV. I am thankful for UNV and IOM Sri Lanka for the opportunity to utilize my experience and further develop knowledge, skills, and competencies that are invaluable for my future endeavours."

**Thilina Galappatti**  
Communication and Information Management  
Officer - IOM

"I am excited to take on my first role as a UNV attached to the Resident Coordinators Office! I look forward to learning from and collaborating with my colleagues, and contribute towards the work of the UN system."

**Lahiri Jayasinghe**

Research Associate – COVID-19 Socioeconomic  
Impact – UNRCO



Keep updated our latest news!



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