

Report of

INDIA - SRI LANKA

YOUTH EXCHANGE (ISYE) '17

(Visit of Indian delegates to Sri Lanka)



GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
AUDACIOUS DREAMS FOUNDATION, INDIA.

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GUSD is an exclusive global brand of Audacious Dreams Foundation, India which aims to inspire, inform, engage, enable and empower the youth around the globe towards Global Understanding for Sustainable Development.

In the past, we have hosted volunteers and youth exchange programme from UK, Sri Lanka, China, Malaysia, Mauritius etc.

We believe this GUSD programme will give an opportunity to unleash the potential of our youth and Indian nationals to empower themselves and community around them. This GUSD visit help our fellow youth to create peace talks, civic responsibility, culture understanding, policy exchange, management skills, communication, rich diverse experience, field visits etc. We see opportunity for youth to develop and engage with societal issues to be a part of new generation change agent.

India Sri Lanka Youth Exchange

We the Audacious Dreams Foundation, India in association with National Youth Services Council (NYSC), Ministry of Youth Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka and Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) jointly hosting the India - Sri Lanka Youth Forum / Exchange (ISYE) series which is planned to happen in both the countries on a regular basis. Approximately 200 youth/students will travel between both countries each year.

We believe this GUSD programme India - Sri Lanka Youth Forum/Exchange will give an opportunity to unleash the potential of our India - Sri Lanka youth to empower themselves and community around them. This GUSD visit helps our fellow youth to be involved in a rich diverse experience engaging in peace talks, civic responsibility, field visits, cultural understanding, policy exchange, communication, etc. We see opportunity for youth to develop and engage with societal issues to be a part of new generation change agents.

This year in 2017, The ISYE - Sri Lankan delegates are expected to arrive on 23rd night of July in India. We, the Indian team, will be welcoming them followed by the orientation programme the next day. Then the Sri Lankan delegates will be in India for 9 days exploring the South Indian states. During these days they will also involve in various meetings and dialogue forums.

THE HOST

Audacious Dreams Foundation (ADF)

Audacious Dreams Foundation (ADF) aims to inspire, inform, engage, enable and empower youth for global understanding and sustainable development. We engage youth in various processes of development from grassroots to global level including mutual dialogue, education, sports for development and peace, rural development, policy making, adolescent health, civic engagement, social entrepreneurship, volunteerism, environment, women's empowerment, vocational training & skill development and more

ADF is working with many global, regional and national organisations, Inter-governmental agencies, International NGOs and governments for the development of youth, contributing to influential global policies and mainstreaming youth participation to achieve sustainable development goals . ADF has worked on diversified projects with United Nations organisation (UNO), Commonwealth networks, SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation), Rotary International, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Association. ADF has been working for the betterment of youth in India by delivering various youth development initiatives at national and local levels by working with organizations, universities, schools and communities across India.

National Youth Services Council (NYSC)

Existence of a multi-talented, disciplined and dynamic youth population in a country is always considered a treasure which helps development of the particular country. As such every country gives a special recognition for the country's youth. Sri Lanka too places utmost importance on the country's youth to achieve her ambitious development targets in social and economic spheres.

Hence, Youth of Sri Lanka are also having an undertaking for economic and social upliftment of the country. It is important to inculcate self-reliance in youths and directing them towards achieving their goals. The National Youth Services Council in Sri Lanka has been established with the aim of guiding the Sri Lankan youth in the proper direction to enable them to empower themselves to their full potential whilst contributing to the nation's prosperity.

The Youth Services Council was established under the Volunteer National Youth Services Act No. 11 of the year 1967 and was revised by the Act No. 52 of 1968. Over the years, activities of the Youth Council were expanded beyond volunteerism and subsequently the scope was revised again under the Youth Services Council Act No.69 of 1979 giving the status of a fully fledged youth development organization.

“We have successfully started our third youth exchange between India and Sri Lanka this year starting from the year 2015. This was a one of the great milestones Audacious has achieved. This will make the participating youth of both the nations to engage in peace talks, make them understand their civic responsibility etc.”



DINESH GAJENDRAN
Catalyst & Executive Director
Audacious Dreams Foundation
Vellore, India.



V. KRISHNAMOORTHY
Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka for South India
Deputy High Commission of Sri Lanka for South India
Chennai, India.

“For the last two years India – Sri Lanka Youth Exchange programme is happening in such a way that it builds and develops a strong relationship between the two participating nations. I would like to appreciate both the host organisations of India (ADF) and Sri Lanka (NYSC) for their continuous effort for the third delegation exchange and I wish them all the success for their future.”

“The power of youth is unimaginable. They are the future of our country. I have to thank Mr. Dinesh Gajendran, Catalyst and Executive Director of Audacious Dreams Foundation for building peace and friendship among the two nations and its youth through this youth exchange programme.”



MADAN MOHAN GOEL
Director
Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development
(RGNIYD) Sriperumbudur, India.
Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt of India

ISYE 2017- Visit of Sri Lankan Delegation

Sri Lankan delegation consists of 29 delegates from different provinces of Sri Lanka. Some are Youth Parliamentarians, some are Youth Federation Members and a few are Assistant Directors of National Youth Services Council (NYSC). The delegation had a good ratio of Tamil and Sinhala, male and female participants which is very appreciable.

Delegates arrived at the Chennai International Airport, Chennai on 23rd July evening. The Catalyst and Executive Director **Mr. Dinesh Gajendran** with the fellow organizers of the Indian host organisation welcomed them.

ITINERARY

(From 27th to 5th September, 2017)

1st Day: Morning 10.00 AM – flight to Sri Lanka

Reached NYSC at 02.30PM

Had dinner, took rest and few of the boys stayed at a resort.

2nd Day: Delegates went to Buddha Tooth Temple which is known as Dalada Maligawa at Kandy

And then they went to Horton Plains National Park where they had an opportunity to see the world's end and finally had home stay at Kurenegala.

3rd Day: Delegates went to Nuwara Eliya then had homestay there.

4th Day: Delegates enjoyed the view of St. Clair's falls which is known as Niagara of Sri Lanka and then they visited Seetha Amman temple and then visited Gregory Lake at Nuwara Eliya which is known as "Little London" where they enjoyed boating and Jet Ski.

5th Day: Delegates visited National Youth Corps and had a chance to see the final selection process and discussed with the UN youth finalists. Following that the delegates visited the Parliament, and then they visited the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs and interacted with **Dr. K.A.S. Keeragala**, Additional Secretary of Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs.

6th Day: Delegates then visited Nagenahiru Centre for Environmental Education where they learned about Sri Lankan biodiversity and went boating around Mangrove Forest there. Then they visited Dutch Fort, Galle, Sri Lanka.

7th Day: Delegates then had another meeting with **Sachinda Dulanjana** who is Regional Representative of Commonwealth Students Association and present speaker at National Youth Parliament Sri Lanka and then visited Sarvodaya, a pioneer in social service and they had a discussion with the manager of International Affairs **Mr. Bandula** at Sarvodaya. At night they had an interaction with **Mr. Sasitha Kamal** and **Mr. Chamal Randunu Amaraweera** Alumni of a program named as 'Ship for World Youth' which is a Japanese government program.

8th Day: Then, the delegates interacted with **Mr. Kusala Kumara Fernando**, Principal of Prince of Wales School, Sri Lanka and they had a wonderful South Indian food. Then they visited SUNFO (Sri Lankan - United Nation Friendship Organization) and interacted with **Deshapriya S. Wijetunge** - Director General of SUNFO.

9th Day: Final day delegates enjoyed a cultural day at NYSC which was facilitated by the assistant directors and youth of Sri Lanka.

10th Day: Delegates then departed from Sri Lanka.

BUDDHA TOOTH RELIC

Arts Forum: Study on Sri Lankan History-Arts – Culture –Tradition

Sri Dalada Maligawa or the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic is a Buddhist temple in the city of Kandy, Sri Lanka. It is located in the royal palace complex of the former Kingdom of Kandy, which houses the relic of the tooth of the Buddha. Since ancient times, the relic has played an important role in local politics because it is believed that whoever holds the relic holds the governance of the country. Kandy was the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings and is a World Heritage Site mainly due to the temple.

Delegates here were guided by the local guide and they got to know the history behind the temple and the elephant called 'Raja' which was preserved there inside the temple campus.

This helped the delegates to understand the rise and the importance of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.



SEETHA AMMAN TEMPLE

Seetha Amman Temple is located approximately 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) from Hakgala Botanical Garden and 5 kilometres (3.1 mi) from Nuwara Eliya. The temple is located in the village of Seetha Eliya (also known as Sita Eliya). This place is believed to be the site where Sita was held captive by (Vikram) king Ravana, and where she prayed daily for Rama to come and rescue her in the Hindu epic, Ramayana. On the rock face across the stream are circular depressions said to be the footprints of Ravana's elephant.

Delegates visited the temple and did prayer after which the poojari of the temple shared the whole history of the temple to the delegates. Then they saw the 'footprints' of the elephant of Ravana which is on the rocks beside the temple.



GREGORY LAKE

Lake Gregory is a reservoir in heart of the tea country hill city, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka. Lake Gregory was constructed during the period of British Governor Sir William Gregory in 1873.

The lake and the surrounding area make up the Gregory Lake Area.

Delegates visited this lake which was one of the most beautiful in its kind and there they enjoyed jet ski ride and boating. It helped all delegates from different parts of India to interact and bond among themselves. One of the delegates shared "It is going to be one of my everlasting memories".



HORTON PLAINS NATIONAL PARK

Our Indian delegates visited Horton Plains National Park which is a protected area in the central highlands of Sri Lanka and is covered by montane grassland and cloud forest. This plateau is at an altitude of 2,100–2,300 metres (6,900–7,500 ft). Delegates got an understanding of biodiversity. They also got to know about the endemic species to that region.



ST. CLAIR'S FALLS



Our Delegates then visited St. Clair's Falls which is one of the widest waterfalls in Sri Lanka and is commonly known as the "**Little Niagara of Sri Lanka**". It is one of six waterfalls affected by the Upper Kotmale Hydropower Project. The falls is situated 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) west of the town of Talawakele on the Hatton-Talawakele Highway in Nuwara Eliya District.

DUTCH FORT, GALLE, SRI LANKA

Delegates visited **Galle Fort**, in the Bay of Galle on the southwest coast of Sri Lanka which was built first in 1588 by the Portuguese, then extensively fortified by the Dutch during the 17th century from 1649 onwards.



They had a chance to see this historical, archaeological and architectural heritage monument, which even after more than 423 years maintains a polished appearance, due to extensive reconstruction work done by Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka. There they also saw the monument and understood the history behind the fort.

NAGENAHIRU ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

As part of the Education forum our delegates visited **Nagenahiru Centre for Environmental Education**. There the staff gave a wonderful lecture about the flora and fauna of Sri Lanka. Delegates also saw different kinds of plants inside the campus. After that along with the staff they went around the Mangrove forest areas in a boat.



They also saw the mangroves planted by themselves. Nagenahiru centre comes under Nagenahiru Foundation. They work for mangroves, environmental education, Agro Biodiversity, medicinal plants, climate change mitigation and early childhood development.

SRI LANKAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

In National Youth Services Council (NYSC) **Mr. Kusala Kumara Fernando**, principal of Prince of Wales school, Sri Lanka, gave a lecture on the complete education system of Sri Lanka at it's present level, strength and weakness etc. There Indian delegates started asking questions and shared their opinions too.

This posed as a great opportunity for delegates to understand the education system of Sri Lanka.

SUNFO

Sri Lanka - United Nations Friendship Organisation (SUNFO) was the place where our delegates visited next and received a very warm welcome by the Director General of SUNFO **Mr. Desapriya S Wijetunge**. Afterwards other important personalities shared their experiences with the delegates. The leader of Indian delegation **Mr. Dinesh Gajendran** talked about the importance of this majestic Youth Exchange Program and initiated the process of doing more visits and partnerships with SUNFO.



Then SUNFO was visited by the Member of Parliament His Excellency **Mr. Rajaram**. There our delegates interacted with the MP and shared their views on Sri Lanka. He shared his experience in India.

SARVODAYA

Sarvodaya is a Non - Profit Organisation in Sri Lanka which has many different units such as Desodaya, Disaster Management Unit, Early childhood development unit, International unit, rural technical services unit, Woodwork and exports unit, Community health unit, Sarvodaya institute of higher learning, Sarvodaya shramadana society etc. Delegates visited this organisation and interacted with **Mr. Bandula**, the international division manager.

He explained the operation, management and funding of Sarvodaya Organisation and asked about Indian views on Sri Lanka and Indian delegates shared their ideas and asked to work together with Sarvodaya in the coming future.

KURUNEGALA HOME STAY

After visiting Horton Plains National Park we ended up in Kurunegala, a district in Sri Lanka where we were warmly welcomed by a Buddhist Monk and the local people along with alumni of previous youth exchange delegates. Then there was a very good interaction with local people, their practises, their way of living, their religious views, their family bonding etc. which acted as a great platform for Indian delegates to understand the local living style of Kurenegala.

After the function, the delegates were divided into pairs and were taken to different homes for home stay which was the most amazing part of the journey. There they were served with the local food and were given shelter. Delegates mingled with the family members and became family members too. Even without knowing the language they were able to communicate and interact with family members, build their relationships and some delegates even learned a little local language. It was an amazing and unique experience for the delegates.



NUWARA ELIYA HOME STAY

The next day after finishing their travel they went to Nuwara Eliya which was known as "Little London" of Sri Lanka. There they were welcomed warmly by the local MLA equivalent official and officers from the National Youth Services Council, Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka.

After interacting with him and the local gathering there, delegates were again split into two and were sent to the local people's houses for home stay. Again that was the most wonderful part of the exchange program which gave them the confidence to be with strangers without even knowing the local language. There the delegates were given local food or the food they asked for and were taken care as their own family members and children.

Diplomatic Forum: Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Sri Lanka & Visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The most important part of this Youth Exchange program is the Diplomatic Forum i.e, official visit to the official places of Sri Lanka. One among them is Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka. There the delegates had an interactive session with the additional Secretary **Dr. K.A.S. Kareegala**. The session was about the youth participation in the governance, their roles in various policy making aspects, the importance given to youth of Sri Lanka, the diplomatic opportunities available to Sri Lankan youth and the government aided bodies which are working for the development and welfare of youth of Sri Lanka.



Our Indian delegates also asked questions about the basic working and operation of youth bodies in Sri Lanka and also shares the importance given to youth in India and the involvement of Indian youth in local and national governance also the roles and responsibilities of Indian youth. This seemed to be very useful and informative part of our journey in Sri Lanka through which the delegates got a bigger picture of Sri Lankan youth and their roles for the development and welfare of the nation.



Again this is also a very important part of the exchange where the delegates were taken into the **Sri Lankan Parliament**. There was guide from the parliament who guided the delegates throughout the campus which was fully secured. Delegates came to know that the Sri Lankan parliament has many different endemic practises like on-spot immediate translation of the speeches of parliamentarians in different languages, the importance given to Tamil language there and also they learned about the Sergeant-at-arms' role in the parliament, the role of Japanese government in Sri Lanka's development and more.

VISIT TO NATIONAL YOUTH CORPS

Youth and Peace Building Forum

Our delegates had a chance to visit **National Youth Corps**, an autonomous body under Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs. There the delegates had the opportunity to see the final selection process of UN delegation of Sri Lanka which was handled by the additional secretary of Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka. After the selection the delegates had a very good interactive session with the finalists of the selection process. One of the delegates shared that the interaction with the finalists was very informative and motivational that it made her want to get more involved in diplomatic relations arena.



INTERACTION WITH SWYAA EDITOR AND NATIONAL LEADER FOR 'SHIP FOR WORLD YOUTH' PROGRAM



On 7th day evening our delegates had a very special interaction with the editor of Ship for World Youth Alumni Association **Mr. Sasitha Kamal** and The National Leader for Ship for World Youth program of Sri Lanka about a very unique and very diplomatic program known as '**Ship for World Youth**' which is a Japanese Cabinet Ministry funding program. It is all about travelling to most of the countries of the world in a ship and meeting different young

people in different nations and also participating in various diplomatic meetings and forums all over the world. Our Indian delegates were very interested and asked a lot of questions about the program and also enquired how to get involved in the program and the selection processes. They realised that there are lot of things happening around the world and we have to find them and get ourselves involved.

This part of the 'exchange' program really did what the name says, it was full of entertainment, fun, experience sharing, feedback, laughter, claps, awards and cultural performances by both the Indian and Sri Lankan delegates.

The cultural forum took place at one of the auditoriums of National Youth Services Council. The Assistant Directors of National Youth Services Council headed the cultural ceremony which was also the final ceremony. Our Indian team leader **Mr. Dinesh Gajendran** gave the introductory speech where he shared the story of the exchange and the learnings and experiences the delegates had in overall. The gathering was echoed with the cultural performances by both the participating nations, claps and cheering voices.



A group of 30 including a few Sri Lankan coordinators started dancing and singing. Finally the participants, coordinators, leaders, directors everyone were appreciated and presented with the awards by dignitaries.

PARTNERS /INSTITUTIONS/HOSTS ENGAGED

- **National Youth Services Council (NYSC)**
- **National Youth Corps**
- **Sri Lankan Parliament**
- **Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs**
- **Sri Lankan – United Nations Friendship Organisation (SUNFO)**
- **Sarvodaya Shramadana Organisation**
- **Nagenahiru Centre for Environmental Education, Nagenahiru Foundation**
- **Joy Foundation, Uttarakhand, India.**
- **Maharani Gayathri Devi School, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.**
- **NPS International School, Assam, India.**
- **Rotary International District RI 3231.**

THE WAY FORWARD

Thus, Audacious Dreams Foundation, India has successfully completed its third India – Sri Lanka Youth Exchange forum (ISYE '17) in association with many hosts, networks and partners. It has gained more experience and contacts which will be very useful in organising Youth Exchange Programs in the upcoming years through which Indian delegates are given wider experiences in the global arena. We look forward to more commitments and engagements from partners and participants as well.

With Thanks & Regards

**GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**AUDACIOUS DREAMS FOUNDATION
INDIA.**