

INTROSPECTION

Quarterly Newsletter of Internews Sri Lanka

Celebrating peaceful pluralism with youth on International Youth Day



Photographs from the storytellers

Quarter in Figures

- Trained 12 women journalists and civil society representatives on digital security
- Trained 21 journalists on media polarization and supported them for content creation
- Conducted a content creation competition for youth aged between 15-29
- The Facebook album containing the submissions reached 80,627 people and 892 engagements

[#EverydayHarmony Storytelling Competition](#) was organized in August for youth aged between 15 – 29 to mark the International Youth Day commemorated on August 12th. A month prior to the day, the competition was announced on [Facebook page](#) of Internews Sri Lanka and participants were encouraged to share stories from their childhood/ youth which celebrates diversity. Submissions which were in either Sinhala/ English/ Tamil were then translated to the other two languages and posted on the page. Out of the 32 submissions received, the majority were about ethnic and religious harmony. Gender diversity also came through as a key topic

Within a week, the album containing all submissions had organically reached 80,627 people and 892 engagements were reported. Based on the number of likes the posts received, five winners were announced, and invited to join an upcoming content creation capacity building program organized by Internews Sri Lanka. Commenting on the story shared by Ganga Rathnayake entitled Saraswathi Pooja, Janith Peiris mentioned that

“Religions are not the places where we should limit ourselves as extremists. Especially, Buddhists should not do that. By being friends with people from other religious beliefs, we can learn not only about those religions but also learn about their cultures which contribute for reconciliation. Sharing your story will enlighten and inspire many people”

- Janith Peiris -

Thank you for organizing the event, Internews Sri Lanka. This gave me an opportunity to refresh friendship with my Tamil friend, Inthu. I think this was a good initiative to renew friendships across ethnicities

- Praveena Muhandiram (One of the winners of the competition)



EVERYDAY HARMONY STORYTELLING COMPETITION

WINNERS



Mohamed
Safnas



Praveena
Muhandiram



Dini
Fernando



Pavithrani
Dissanayake



Sihani
Pramoda

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Announcing the winners

Women activists learned to keep themselves and others safe online



Safe Sister handbooks in English, Tamil and Sinhala

Internews Sri Lanka adapted and delivered **SafeSisters**, Internews' digital security fellowship virtually. 12 female participants including 4 journalists and 8 CSO representatives took part in month-long virtual workshops conducted by the international digital rights activist Dhyta Caturani and Sri Lankan digital security trainer Vibooshi Balakrishnan. As a part of the program, Safe Sisters handbook was also localized and translated into Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages. Prior to the program, a needs assessment was conducted to better gauge the knowledge of the participants through which it was identified that the key skills that needed to be developed included improving the technical knowledge on securing devices, circumventing censorship, and data protection. The participants had an opportunity to share experiences and lessons with Safe Sisters in previous cohorts from East Africa.

This program is creating partnerships among participants that will build and empower a network of women civil society leaders and community leaders to take on the most pressing digital challenges that keep women from being able to navigate the online world safely.

"I come from a tech background in electronics & communications engineering. But this journey was indeed transformational for me. The trainers provided us a holistic approach to digital security which was very valuable. Kudos for making it so simple and thank you!"

Mahisha Balraj - Co-founder, Hashtag Generation

Journalists received on-the-job training to identify and respond to media polarization



A screen image taken during the introductory workshop

Internews Sri Lanka collaborated with Verité Research, an independent research institute and Think Tank to conduct a virtual News Lab on "Polarization of Sri Lankan media." Inspired by a discussion in a networking event organized by Internews in April, this News Lab sought to train journalists to spot polarization and report inclusively. 22 participants including 8 Sinhala, 8 Tamil, and 6 Muslim journalists participated in the News Lab and they were selected through an open call for applications. The trilingual team from Verité Research conducted the workshop seamlessly switching between English, Sinhala, and Tamil, making sure everyone felt comfortable to speak in their native tongue.

On the second day of the lab, journalists paired up to brainstorm story ideas which they then pitched to the rest of the team. Having received feedback from their colleagues and mentors, the cross-cultural teams are now creating content about the various instances where Sinhala, English, and Tamil media were polarized. Examples include a comparative analysis of front-page headlines in Sinhala and Tamil print media, how the recent teacher protests were reported by Sinhala, Tamil, and English media, and an analysis on the polarized responses to the P2P walk.

These journalists are assisted and mentored by 3 senior journalists with newsroom expertise to create and publish 17 articles and 4 Mojos.



Internews is an international non-profit media development organization with a presence in 100+ countries, whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard. Internews has been working in Sri Lanka for 15+ years.



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