



2023 **ANNUAL** **REPORT**

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO
FACULTY OF LAW
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CSHR)

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CSHR)

CSHR

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- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/centre-for-the-study-of-human-rights-university-of-colombo-986121280>
- <https://twitter.com/CSHRUOC>
- <https://www.youtube.com/@cshrcentreforthestudyofhu>



VISION

To be a center of excellence for creating a nation with a rights consciousness in which the dignity and rights of all people are respected.

MISION

To foster human rights education, research, capacity building, and knowledge services using a multidisciplinary approach

MANDATE

As a non-profit educational institution attached to the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, CSHR's mandate is to conduct and facilitate human rights education and research programmes for the university and the community at large.

Message by the Director



The year 2023 marked another significant milestone in the continued growth and development of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR). Guided by our commitment to academic excellence, institutional integrity, and the promotion of human rights, we continued to strengthen our position as Sri Lanka's leading centre for human rights education, research, and capacity building.

During the year, the Centre undertook comprehensive reviews and revisions of its academic by-laws, curricula, and quality

assurance mechanisms in alignment with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF). These initiatives not only enhanced the quality and relevance of our existing academic programmes but also facilitated the introduction of new programmes designed to address emerging national and global human rights challenges.

Beyond academic development, CSHR expanded its contribution to society through impactful research, professional training, and strategic partnerships with government institutions, international organizations, civil society, and development partners. Our capacity-building programmes, particularly those conducted for public sector institutions and justice sector stakeholders, reinforced rights-based approaches while promoting professionalism, accountability, and good governance.

This Annual Report reflects the collective dedication and commitment of our academic staff, administrative team, researchers, programme coordinators, students, alumni, and institutional partners. Their unwavering support has enabled the Centre to continue delivering meaningful outcomes despite an increasingly dynamic and challenging environment.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, the Board of Management, our collaborating institutions, funding agencies, development partners, and all stakeholders for their invaluable guidance, confidence, and continued support.

As we move forward, CSHR remains firmly committed to advancing excellence in teaching, research, knowledge dissemination, and community engagement. We will continue to champion the principles of human dignity, equality, justice, democracy, and the rule of law while contributing to the development of a more inclusive, equitable, and rights-conscious society.

Professor (Chair) Wasantha Seneviratne

Professor of Public and International Law

Director, Centre for the Study of Human Rights

Department of Public and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo

Message by the Deputy Director



The accomplishments of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights during 2023 reflect another year of steady progress, innovation, and institutional excellence. Throughout the year, our primary focus remained on enhancing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of our academic programmes while strengthening our engagement with the wider community.

Significant efforts were devoted to reviewing academic by-laws, curricula, and programme structures in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF). These quality enhancement initiatives ensured that our academic offerings remain responsive to evolving educational standards and the contemporary needs of professionals working across diverse sectors.

The Centre also continued to strengthen its collaboration with government agencies, international organizations, civil society institutions, and community stakeholders through a wide range of training programmes, research initiatives, and knowledge-sharing activities. These partnerships have played an important role in promoting human rights awareness, professional development, and institutional capacity across Sri Lanka.

The achievements highlighted in this report are the result of teamwork, commitment, and shared vision. I express my sincere gratitude to our Director, the Vice Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, the Board of Management, our dedicated academic and administrative staff, development partners, programme coordinators, researchers, students, and collaborating institutions for their invaluable support throughout the year.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to fostering academic excellence, innovation, and meaningful community engagement while continuing to uphold the values of human rights, equality, justice, democracy, and social inclusion. Together, we will continue to strengthen the Centre's contribution towards building a more informed, equitable, and rights-respecting society.

Mr. M A M Hakeem

*Deputy Director, Centre for the Study of Human Rights,
Senior Lecturer, Department of Public and International Law, Faculty of Law,
University of Colombo*

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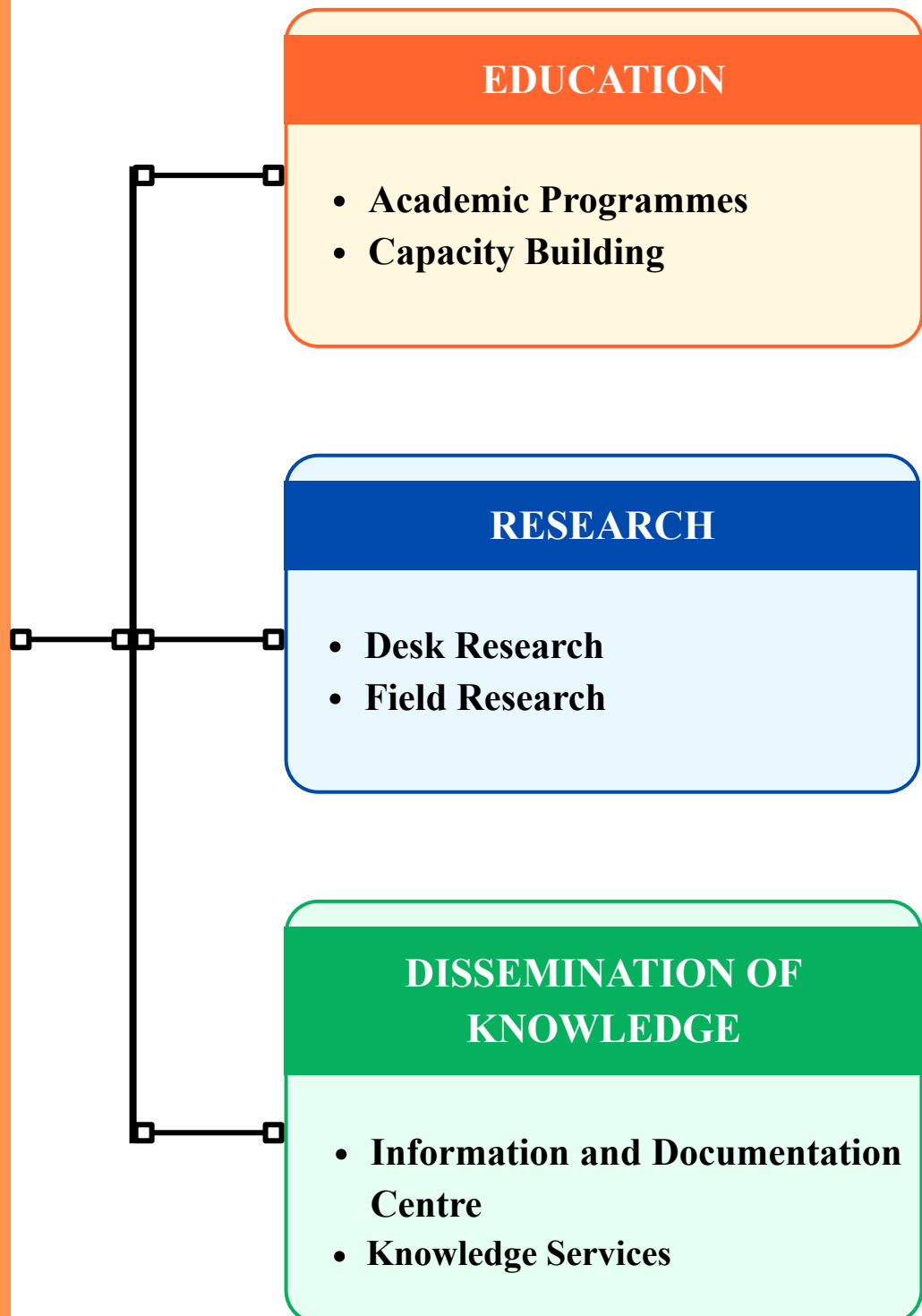
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Our Profile -----

Established in 1991, the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) is a premier non-profit academic institution attached to the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo. For more than three decades, the Centre has served as Sri Lanka's leading institution dedicated to the advancement of human rights through education, research, capacity building, knowledge services, and institutional development.

As the first specialized human rights centre within the Sri Lankan university system, CSHR has earned national and international recognition for its commitment to promoting human dignity, equality, justice, democracy, and the rule of law. The Centre functions as an important bridge between academia, government institutions, civil society, development partners, and the wider community by translating academic knowledge into practical solutions that contribute to social progress.

Operating under the mandate of the University of Colombo, CSHR designs and delivers a broad spectrum of academic programmes ranging from certificate-level courses to postgraduate degrees, providing quality education that meets both national priorities and international standards. Through continuous curriculum development and quality assurance initiatives, the Centre ensures that its programmes remain relevant to contemporary human rights challenges and professional practice.

Research remains one of the Centre's core strengths. CSHR conducts multidisciplinary research addressing critical legal, social, and policy issues while generating evidence-based recommendations that contribute to national development, policy reform, and the promotion of human rights.

The Centre also undertakes extensive capacity-building programmes in collaboration with government agencies, law enforcement institutions, educational organizations, international development partners, and community groups. These initiatives strengthen institutional capacities, enhance professional competencies, and promote rights-based approaches across multiple sectors.

Through its Information and Documentation Centre, CSHR provides comprehensive knowledge services by maintaining an extensive collection of print and digital resources that support students, academics, researchers, practitioners, and the general public.

Guided by its vision of creating a society founded upon respect for human dignity and fundamental rights, CSHR continues to expand its impact through academic excellence, innovative partnerships, community engagement, and sustainable institutional development, reaffirming its role as a centre of excellence in human rights education and research both nationally and internationally.

Human Rights Education -----



Human Rights Education remains one of the core pillars of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) and is central to its mandate of promoting a society founded on respect for human dignity, equality, justice, and the rule of law. Through high-quality academic programmes and innovative learning approaches, CSHR continues to cultivate a deeper understanding of human rights among diverse groups of learners while preparing professionals capable of addressing contemporary human rights challenges.

Recognising that human rights is an interdisciplinary field with growing national and global significance, CSHR delivers educational programmes that integrate legal, social, political, administrative, and ethical perspectives. These programmes are carefully designed to provide participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical competencies required to promote and protect human rights within their respective professions and communities.

Since the introduction of its educational programmes, the Centre has continuously expanded its academic portfolio to meet the evolving needs of students, public sector officials, legal professionals, educators, members of the security forces, civil society organizations, private sector professionals, and the general public. During 2023, significant efforts were made to strengthen programme quality through curriculum enhancement, revision of academic by-laws, and alignment with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), ensuring that all programmes continue to meet nationally recognised academic standards.

CSHR adopts a learner-centred approach that combines classroom instruction, interactive discussions, practical training, field-based learning, research activities, and digital learning methodologies. This comprehensive approach enables participants to develop critical thinking, analytical skills, ethical leadership, and practical problem-solving abilities while fostering a strong commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.

The Centre offers a wide range of academic programmes, including Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Higher Diplomas, Diplomas, Advanced Certificates, and Certificate Programmes, providing flexible learning opportunities for individuals from diverse educational and professional backgrounds.

The following section highlights the Human Rights Education programmes conducted by the Centre during the year 2023, demonstrating CSHR's continued commitment to academic excellence, professional development, and the advancement of human rights education in Sri Lanka and beyond.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. ASIA PACIFIC MASTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATISATION – APMA PROGRAMME

The Asia Pacific Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (APMA) is a one-year interdisciplinary program that highlights the inseparable links between human rights, democracy, peace, and development in the Asia Pacific region. It provides in depth understanding of local, regional and global human rights and democratisation issues. The course is open for human rights and democracy practitioners and activists, for those engaged in related fields, or for highly motivated graduates and academics who have just completed their first degrees.

APMA was commenced in 2010, as a result of the European Commission's initiative to establish the Global Campus for Human Rights in 2010. The Global Campus for Human Rights in the Asia Pacific was established initially in the University of Sydney, Australia and later transferred to the University of Mahidol in 2015, and now being implemented by Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies of Mahidol University (Thailand). Currently, four (4) universities jointly offer the program as partner universities; Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines), Kathmandu School of Law (Nepal), University of Colombo (Sri Lanka), and University of Gadjah Madah (Indonesia). The Inauguration ceremony of the APMA Programme 2023/2024 was held on 21st February 2024 at the Board Room, faculty of Law, University of Colombo and the Orientation was held on 22nd of February 2024 at the Board Room, faculty of Law, University of Colombo. Five students from the Asia Pacific region joined for their second semester in University of Colombo. During the second semester at the University of Colombo, APMA students participated in a series of academic and cultural field visits. Academic visits to institutions such as the Parliament of Sri Lanka, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, and prisons provided practical insights into governance, human rights, and the justice system. Cultural visits to Kandy and Galle enabled students to gain a deeper appreciation of Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage, diversity, and socio-political context.

APMA programme is funded by the European Commission through the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand.

INAUGURATION CEREMONY AND THE FIELD VISITS OF THE APMA PROGRAMME



2. MASTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATISATION (LOCAL) PROGRAMME

The Master of Human Rights and Democratisation (Local) Programme is designed for mid-career professionals and highly motivated graduates. The degree offers students a unique opportunity to engage first-hand with regional and international human rights and democratisation issues and to interact with internationally acclaimed academics, practitioners and experts.

The local program started in 2015, to link with the Asia Pacific MHRD program. Initially, the syllabus was developed with the contribution of the experts in human rights and democracy, in the Asia Pacific region by the University of Sydney, Australia. The program was linked to the Sydney program and later transferred to Mahidol University, Thailand. Therefore, the local students will have the opportunity to interact with a group of international students from the Asia Pacific Region coming from Mahidol University, during the Second Semester.

MHRD is a unique and multi-disciplinary post-graduate degree in Sri Lanka. One of the objectives is to explore the nexus between democratic governance and the realisation of human rights. With respect to the curriculum, the content of the course lectures is substantially updated and delivered under the excellent supervision and guidance of the staff of the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo along with several other local and international experts in the field.

The inauguration and orientation of the MHRD 2023/2024 batch were held on the 20th of September 2023 where 37 students registered for the programme. Lectures commenced on the 21st of September 2023. The Semester I examinations were held on 27th & 28th January 2024, while the Semester II examinations were conducted on 27th April 2024.

3. POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CHILD PROTECTION AND RIGHTS

The Postgraduate Diploma in Child Protection and Rights (2021/2022 Batch) was inaugurated in December 2021, and the orientation programme was held in January 2022. A total of 131 students registered for the programme.

The Semester I examinations were successfully conducted on 15th and 16th October 2022, while the Semester II examinations were held on 04th June 2023.

As part of the Semester II examination component, the programme conducted a two-day residential field visit from 18th to 19th February 2023 at the Yahalegama Divisional Secretariat Division, Anuradhapura, to fulfil the programme requirements. A total of 110 students and three CSHR staff members participated in the field visit.

The students who successfully completed the programme graduated at the Convocation held in December 2023. A total of 113 students successfully completed the programme, with one student obtaining a Distinction Pass, 82 students obtaining Merit Passes, and 30 students obtaining Ordinary Passes, reflecting a commendable level of academic achievement.



DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

4. HIGHER DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS BASED HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This programme is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interface between human rights and human resource management with special reference to business and labour relations. This study program aims to provide significant subject knowledge of which is essential for all individuals who are part of, or are interested in business environment and human rights. This course will enhance their knowledge on diverse aspects of human rights, human resource management, business and labour relations and make them familiar with law, regulations and procedures involved in enforcing the same as all business enterprises and individuals are expected to respect human rights to create a conducive environment for both the employer and employees.

5. DIPLOMA IN MEDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) initiated the Diploma in Media and Human Rights programme in 2023, offering the programme in both Sinhala and Tamil mediums. Following the approval of the programme bylaws, CSHR organized a workshop titled "Media and Human Rights" on 23rd September 2023 at the National Art Theatre (NAT) to introduce the programme and raise awareness of media-related human rights issues.

The workshop was conducted in both Sinhala and Tamil, attracting approximately 200 participants. The sessions were facilitated by distinguished resource persons with extensive experience in the media sector, including journalists, representatives from the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, and renowned teledrama directors.

The Diploma in Media and Human Rights programme officially commenced in 2023 in both Sinhala and Tamil mediums. A total of 14 students enrolled in the inaugural batch.



6. DISTANCE LEARNING DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY – DLDHRD

The objective of this programme is to provide academic understanding of the core principles of Human Rights and Democracy with unique consideration to the current trend. Distance mode of education will enable participants who are working at the grassroots level to enhance the necessary skills to further their profession, towards making a positive impact on the protection and promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in the wider society.

The course modules and the by-laws were revised according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards.

The orientation and the first lecture for the 2023/24 batch were held on 23rd September 2023.

7. E DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS

This programme was launched in 2009 as a unique e-learning programme to give the participants an introduction to both international human rights norms and standards and domestic implementation of human rights and fundamental rights standards. The diploma can also serve as a stepping stone for further studies in Human Rights, including postgraduate studies courses provided by the University of Colombo.

The orientation for the E Diploma in Human Rights 2023/24 batch was held on 07th of July 2023. The IT Officer conducted the Orientation, and the first lecture on Introduction to Human Rights, referencing, and assignment writing was conducted by the Academic Coordinator, Mr. Isuru Liyanage.

The course modules and the by-laws were revised according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards 2015. The final examination was held on 22nd of July 2024, where 18 students sat for the examination.

8. DIPLOMA IN HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2023, the E-diploma in Human Rights programme was renamed the Diploma in Human Rights. Following this change, the programme by-law and concept paper were revised and subsequently approved by the relevant authorities of the University of Colombo to reflect the new programme title and updated curriculum.

Orientation of the Diploma in Human Rights 2023/24 batch was held on 07th of July 2023. The Orientation was conducted by the IT Officer, and the first lecture on Introduction to Human Rights, referencing, and assignment writing was conducted by the Academic Coordinator, Mr. Isuru Liyanage. The course modules and the by-laws were revised according to the Sri Lanka Quality Framework (SLQF) standards 2015.

The final examination was held on 22nd of July 2024, where 21 students sat for the examination.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

9. ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

This is an Advanced Certificate in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law offered by the Centre for the study of Human Rights (CSHR), University of Colombo. CSHR offers this Course for armed forces, human rights activists, professionals engaged in protecting and promoting human rights, University students, NGO and INGO workers, community leaders, government officers and others who are interested in this programme.

Those who follow this programme will gain a comprehensive understanding of the Law and its practical application when dealing with human rights issues and how it applies to both individuals and society.

This course is an introduction to human rights and international humanitarian law. It focuses on the very basics of the relevant areas, particularly emphasizing on the most important aspects, namely, history and background of human rights and international humanitarian law, fundamental rights, international treaties, norms and principles related to human rights and international humanitarian law and mechanisms of implementing these regimes.

10. ADVANCED CERTIFICATE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME IN CHILD CARE AND RIGHTS

The field of child care and child rights have become an important body of knowledge in disciplines such as law, sociology, psychology, social work, law enforcement, public policy formulation and implementation etc. It has been an evolving subject in all academic levels with the growing democracy and modernization throughout the world.

The Advanced Certificate and Certificate on Child Care and Rights – Cert (Child Care and Rights) is a practice oriented programme targeted at child protection sector, child rights and human rights activism, professionals engaged in protecting and promoting child rights and preventing child abuse in the society. child care and child rights have drawn the attention of academics, administrators, policy makers, NGOs, INGOs, donor community and interested members of the civil society over the past years.

This Programme is intended to provide and develop the necessary knowledge, enhance the skills and inculcate attitudes in the area of child care and child rights.

, who keen to know the basics of human rights

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, successfully conducted the Certificate Programme on Child Care and Rights – 2023 in three months collaboration with Catholic Care for Children Sri Lanka, with the participation of 74 students.

As part of the programme, a specialized Alternative Care Workshop was organized with the support of experienced resource persons from the Department of Probation and Child Care Services. The workshop provided participants with practical knowledge and insights into alternative care systems, child protection mechanisms, and the role of probation and child care services in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children.



Institutional Development -----

1. THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE EQUALITY ADVANCEMENT PROJECT (NLEAP): RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) conducted a research study on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Language Rights with the support of the National Languages Equality Advancement Project (NLEAP) implemented by Alinea International. NLEAP is a joint initiative of the Government of Canada, represented by Global Affairs Canada, and the Government of Sri Lanka.

The study highlights that gender equality is a fundamental human right and an essential condition for achieving social justice, sustainable development, and equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and decision-making processes. NLEAP seeks to reduce poverty and promote social and economic equality among Sinhala- and Tamil-speaking communities in Sri Lanka by supporting the effective implementation of the Official Languages Policy (OLP).

A key focus of the research was the integration of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) into language rights policies and programmes. The study found that the non-implementation of the Official Languages Policy contributes to discrimination against women who can communicate only in one official language, limiting their access to services and opportunities. The findings further emphasize that the effective implementation of the OLP is crucial for advancing women's empowerment, equality, and protection from discrimination.

The Research Report on Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment and Language Rights was officially launched on 5th July 2023 at the Faculty of Law, where the research findings and recommendations were presented and discussed.

2. SUPPORT TO JUSTICE SECTOR PROJECT (JURE)/UNDP: ENHANCING LEGAL AWARENESS OF PUBLIC AND JUSTICE STAKEHOLDERS:

This project is carried out through The Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE), funded by the European Union, and jointly implemented by UNDP and UNICEF Sri Lanka, facilitated by the Ministry of Justice. Through this project, the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) has made a significant contribution to expanding access to justice, strengthening legal education, and enhancing community legal awareness across Sri Lanka.

Under the project, CSHR is implementing the following activities:

1. Clinical legal education: conducted 5 legal aid camps in Ratnapura, Nuwara Eliya, Kurunegala, Katunayake, and Negombo with law students.

- 285 law students received practical training on legal consultations with clients from marginalized communities, under the professional supervision of senior attorneys-at-law supporting in pro bono basis.
- 401 clients mainly from marginalised communities received free legal advice.

2. Community legal education:

- 62 law students gained practical experience in providing legal education to communities.
- 1617 school students in 7 schools in Gampaha and Kurunegala received legal awareness on youth-related issues: cyber violence, sexual violence, drugs (Ave Maria Convent, Negombo; St Mary's College, Negombo; Vidyalankara College, Negombo; Ibbagamuwa Central College, Kurunegala; Gnanodaya College, Wariyapola; Wayamba Royal College, Kurunagala; and Maliyadeva Model School, Kurunegala).
- 120 officers in Divisional Secretariats of Talawakele and Kurunegala provided with legal awareness.

3. Free legal advice and related services

- 4173 clients were provided free legal advice, documentation support, referral and follow-up services at district level, across the country.
- 22 early career lawyers, including from UOC, were provided with partial employment opportunities.
- 22 law students, including from UOC, were provided with partial income and a learning opportunity by contributing to project work.

4. Supporting UOC online legal reference collection:

- Through the project, the CSHR supported USD 1313,685 to renew subscriptions of online law journal databases: Oxford (law collection), LexisNexis, LawLanka, HeinOnline.
- Expanded the reference collection of the CSHR library with recent publications in emerging areas of law and human rights.

5. Legal and interdisciplinary research:

- Sri Lanka Journal of Human Rights: Volume 5 Issue 1 and 2 are finalised; and finalised call for papers for Volume 6.
- Engaging recent law graduates in writing Fundamental Rights (FR) case summaries and commentaries.
- Developing an online database of FR case summaries and commentaries.

6. Strengthening mandates of justice sector institutions while increasing employability of law students:

- Supported the Human Rights Commission (HRCSL) with 4 paid legal interns for case management support.
- This enabled the HRCSL to expedite services to more than 7,000 clients.
- Exploring to engage the support of law students to support bail applications of detainees in the Department of Prisons.
- Exploring to engage law students as interns to Legal Aid Commission.

7. The CSHR facilitated the Faculty of Law to expand multidisciplinary educational opportunities:

- Diploma in Gender, Development, and Human Rights (scholarships available).
- Master of Human Rights and Treatment of Prisoners.

8. Technical support to justice sector institutions:

- Supporting the Department of Prisons to develop a Code of Ethics to its staff, including planning to entrench the ethics through systematic trainings to the Staff .



3. SAVE THE CHILDREN: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ADVANCED CERTIFICATE COURSE FOR CAREGIVER STAFF IN STATE CHILDCARE INSTITUTIONS ON MANAGING AND CARING FOR CHILD VICTIMS:

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, with the support of Save the Children in Sri Lanka and in collaboration with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS), conducted a comprehensive gap analysis to assess the knowledge, skills, and capacity of caregiver staff in state and non-state childcare institutions to provide appropriate care and case management for Child Victims of Trafficking (CVoT). This initiative was implemented under the Strengthening Government and CSO Capacity to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Create Greater Impact (IMPACT) Project (2022–2024).

As part of this initiative, CSHR completed a research study on children in institutional care in Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on child victims of trafficking. Field research was conducted in the districts of Colombo, Badulla, Jaffna, and Vavuniya to identify existing gaps and capacity-building needs among caregiver staff.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the study, CSHR facilitated the Faculty of Law in developing an Advanced Certificate Course on Case Management and Care for Child Victims of Trafficking, designed specifically for caregiver staff. The course adopts a rights-based approach to strengthen participants' knowledge and practical skills in providing effective care, protection, and case management for child victims of trafficking.

4. THE ASIA FOUNDATION: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT POSTGRADUATE COURSES (CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA, POSTGRADUATE AND MASTER'S COURSES) ON ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION WITH A FOCUS ON MEDIATION AND TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON MEDIATION:

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR), Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, initiated the development of postgraduate academic programmes in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), with a particular focus on mediation and commercial mediation, under the project "Strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Sri Lanka." The project is implemented in collaboration with The Asia Foundation and supported through the Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE), led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the European Union.

The initiative aims to strengthen Sri Lanka's ADR framework by professionalising mediation education and establishing a structured academic and professional pathway for mediation practitioners. Under this initiative, CSHR facilitated the Faculty of Law in developing four academic programmes in mediation through a consultative process involving legal academics, mediation practitioners, and representatives of civil society.

The programmes developed are:

- Certificate in Mediation
- Diploma in Mediation
- Higher Diploma in Mediation
- Master's Degree in Mediation

The curricula incorporate gender-responsive and inclusive approaches, while the student selection process has been designed to promote accessibility and equitable participation, particularly for persons with disabilities.

5. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC):

Developed and implemented a Certificate Course on Buddhism and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The scope and curriculum of the course were designed through consultations with experts in Buddhism, International Humanitarian Law, legal practitioners, and officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

6. JUNIOR COMMAND AND STAFF TRAINING PROGRAMME ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW:

Since 2008, The CSHR has been conducting three 3 Day programmes annually for the Junior Command and Staff Course of the Air Force. This programme is collaboratively conducted by the Centre for the Study of Human Rights (CSHR) and Sri Lanka Air Force. The programme conducts three times a year as per the request made by Sri Lanka Air Force. The aim of this programme is to provide considerable theoretical and practical knowledge on International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law for both Sri Lankan and foreign middle ranked armed forces officials who are nominated by the relevant authorities.

The sessions were conducted by a dynamic range of resource persons from Faculty of Law, Attorney General's Department, ICRC, and private practitioners to ensure the practical and theoretical aspects covered.

72nd Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2023

- The three-day Training Programme was held from 06th to 08th of February 2023. 29 Air Force officers participated in the training.

73rd Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2023

- The three-day Training Programme was held from 12th to the 14th of June 2023. 29 Air Force officers participated in the training. (01 foreign officer is from India)

74th Junior Command and Staff Training Programme 2023

- The three-day Training Programme was held from 09th to the 11th of October 2023. 25 Air Force officers participated in the training.

AWARDS CEREMONY 2023

The Centre for the Study of Human Rights, University of Colombo proudly hosted the Awards Ceremony 2023 on the 6th of June 2023 at the Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre, under the patronage of the Vice Chancellor, Senior Professor (Chair) H D Karunaratne. The event was graced by distinguished invitees including Retired Justice Rohini Marasinghe, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest; Dr. Prathiba Mahanamahewa, Rector, Sri Palee Campus, Professor (Dr.) Nishantha Sampath Punchihewa, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, the Registrar of the University of Colombo, Mr K A S Edward, the acting Librarian of the University of Colombo, Mrs HMD Sajeewanie D Somaratna, Professor (Chair) Wasantha Seneviratne, Director, CSHR; Mr. M A M. Hakeem, Deputy Director, CSHR; many other academics and professionals of the University of Colombo and distinguished invitees. It was a proud moment for CSHR to giveaway more than 350 awards comprising of Diplomas, Training programmes, Advanced Certificate and Certificate Programmes.



CSHR acknowledged the interns who have completed the internship at CSHR and was grateful to giveaway certificates to the winners and participants of the Photography competition held in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the CSHR.

Students of the following programmes namely received their Diplomas and Certificates at the event; Distance Learning Diploma in Human Rights and Democracy, E-Diploma in Human Rights, Diploma in Human Rights Based Policing, Training of Trainers Programme for officers of the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, Advanced Certificate in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, Distance Learning Advanced Certificate in Human, Rights Approach to Prison Administration, Advanced Certificate and Certificate on Child Care and Rights and Certificate in Human Rights and Fundamental Rights A total of 178 Diplomas were awarded during this prestigious event. Notably, among the awardees, 62 exceptional students received Distinctions, while 86 students received Merits. 78 officers of the Department of Probation and Child Care Services received certificates as Trainer of Trainers on Child Care and Rights.



Dissemination of Knowledge -----

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION UNIT

Through knowledge sharing CSHR aims to provide multicultural and multidisciplinary knowledge services to keep pace with knowledge on human rights by creating awareness among diverse groups of persons at different levels. During the year, CSHR provided knowledge to students, academics, researchers and other persons through its Resource Unit, located within its premises.

The number of books in the Resource Unit increased over the year with 175 new books being added to the collection. The number of books available for referencing added up to 4701. 33 books were removed from the main accession register and the database through the weeding policy.



Donations

Over the year, the CSHR Resource Unit received numerous publications from various donors. These included contributions from Dr. Dharshana Sumanadasa, a former senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law; Professor (Chair) Wasantha Seneviratne; Professor Dr. Nishara Fernando; Ms. Anne Marie Fonseka; Mr. Ruwan Fernando, Attorney-at-Law; the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA); the Office of Missing Persons (OMP); the Sri Lanka Parliament; the Communication Department; and the United Nations. Their donations provided valuable resources to the Resource Unit.

Resource Centre Users

The following memberships were given to all Resource Unit users during the year, for a scheduled period, with the exception of undergraduates having to make a payment. A total of 449 new undergraduate members joined the Resource Unit, broken down as follows:

Faculty of Law	356
Faculty of Arts	79
Faculty of Education	11

University of Kelaniya 03

During this period, 4,398 users attended the Resource Unit. Please note that users are only requested to sign in once per day.

Additionally, the CSHR offers community memberships at a reasonable fee.

Book Borrowing Facility

Books are permitted to be borrowed only by staff of the Faculty of Law, Staff of CSHR and MHRD Students.

LAUNCH OF THE SRI LANKA JOURNAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS (SLJHR)

The CSHR Human Rights Journal was renamed the Sri Lanka Journal of Human Rights (SLJHR) in 2023 to reflect its broader national and international outlook. The Journal aims to advance the human rights discourse in Sri Lanka by promoting scholarship on contemporary and emerging human rights issues. It is a peer-reviewed annual publication, consisting of one volume with two issues, and welcomes contributions from academics, legal practitioners, policymakers, state officials, activists, and members of civil society.

The Journal adopts an international perspective and is not limited to any particular regional or national jurisdiction. It invites original, unpublished manuscripts based on theoretical and empirical research, policy analysis, and critical reflections on contemporary issues relating to human rights and the social sciences. It serves as a platform for both emerging and established researchers to disseminate innovative research that contributes to policy development and informed debate on human rights, law, justice, and governance.

The Journal was first launched in December 2005 as the CSHR Human Rights Journal, with its inaugural volume featuring papers presented at the Centre's Human Rights Day celebrations. Since then, CSHR has published Volumes 1–4, each comprising two issues. Following the rebranding of the Journal in 2023, Volume 5, Issue 1 was published under the title Sri Lanka Journal of Human Rights, while Issue 2 has been finalised and is scheduled for publication during the year.

The publication of Volume 5 was supported through the Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE), funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice.

CSHR welcomed submissions of manuscripts for volume 5 under the focus area of “Challenges to Upholding Human Rights in a Crisis”. The call for papers covered several thematic areas, including protecting Socio-Economic Rights, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Public Security and Human Rights, Protection and Well-being of Children and Access to Justice.

Volume 6 is scheduled for publication next year. CSHR has invited submissions under the theme of "Challenges to Democracy, Governance and Human Rights". The call for papers includes the following thematic areas:

1. Freedom of Expression and Contemporary Challenges;
2. Sovereign Debt and Human Rights;
3. Transparency, Accountability, and Governance;
4. Business and Human Rights;
5. Upholding Representative Democracy;
6. Transitional Justice and Reconciliation; and
7. Protecting Human Rights in Conflict Situations.

The Sri Lanka Journal of Human Rights continues to provide an important platform for scholarly dialogue, interdisciplinary research, and evidence-based policy discussions on pressing human rights issues in Sri Lanka and beyond.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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We gratefully acknowledge the guidance and leadership of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, and the Board of Management for their continued encouragement, strategic direction, and unwavering commitment to the advancement of the Centre's mission.

Our sincere gratitude is extended to our academic staff, administrative staff, programme coordinators, researchers, project personnel, and support staff whose professionalism, dedication, and hard work have been instrumental in achieving the Centre's objectives throughout the year.

We also express our appreciation to our students, alumni, visiting academics, resource persons, and volunteers whose enthusiasm, participation, and commitment have enriched our academic and professional activities.

CSHR is deeply grateful to our national and international development partners, donor agencies, government ministries, public institutions, civil society organizations, universities, professional bodies, and collaborating organizations for their continued trust, technical expertise, financial assistance, and strategic partnerships. Their support has enabled the Centre to successfully implement numerous educational programmes, research initiatives, capacity-building projects, and community outreach activities.

We further acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all stakeholders, participants, and beneficiaries whose engagement has strengthened the Centre's efforts to promote human rights education, research, and public awareness across Sri Lanka.

As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, we recognize that these accomplishments are the result of collective commitment, collaboration, and shared purpose. We look forward to strengthening these partnerships as we continue our mission of advancing human rights, justice, equality, and democratic values for the benefit of present and future generations.

