



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Abbreviations

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

The Asia Foundation (TAF)

German Agency for International Corporation (GIZ)

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Westminster Federation for Democracy (WFD)

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

Science and Technology Human Resource Development (STHRD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

The Inequality Report (TIER)

Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI)

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Committee on Public Finance (COPF)

Emergency Social Protection Project (ESSP)

Environmental and Social Standard (ESS)

Anticipatory Action (AA)

Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

Blue Resources Trust (BRT)

Centre for Smart Futures (CSF)
Civil Society Organization (CSO)
Social Science Research Council (SSRC)
Indian Ocean (IO)
Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)
Evolved Research Consulting (ERC)
Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP)
Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLiP)
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
End of Life (EOL)
Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSME)
Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)
Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME)
Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD)
Migration Policy Institute (MPI)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)
European Union (EU)
National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS)
Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
MENASP (Middle East and North Africa Social Policy Network)
American University of Beirut (AUB)
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP)

Supporting Effective Dispute Resolution - (SEDR)
Research Quality and Learning (RQL)\
Research Reflection & Practice (RRP)
Search For Common Grounds (SFCG)
Kinder not hilfe (KNH)
Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI).
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)
International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP)
Grounded Accountability Model (GAM)
Climate Action South Asia (CANSA)
Centre for National Operations (CNO)
UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)
Integrated Fisheries Development Center (IFDC)
Urban Development Authority (UDA)
South Asia Network for Development and Environmental Economics
(SANDEE)
Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHSS)
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM)
Law & Society Trust (LST)

** Cover Photo CEPA Symposium: Poverty in an Era of Economic Crisis - November 2023.*

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,



As we entered 2023, Sri Lanka faced its most severe economic crisis to date. This challenging environment led to uncompetitive salaries, high overhead costs, and limited work outputs across various sectors. The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) was not immune to these challenges, experiencing significant turnover as senior and mid-level researchers departed, impacting our progress.

Recognizing the urgency, our new Executive Director took decisive steps to stabilize and strengthen CEPA's team. Key leadership positions, including those for the Basic Services and Social Protection team and the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation team, were filled with experienced senior researchers from industry. Additionally, we welcomed a dynamic group of young researchers into junior positions, infusing the organization with fresh perspectives and enthusiasm. This revitalized workforce spearheaded the pursuit of new projects and the continuation of ongoing research. In 2023, CEPA engaged in 29 projects and carried forward 8 projects from 2022.

We continued to foster professional growth and knowledge exchange through our Research Reflection Practices Series. This series facilitates interactions among CEPA members, Board Members, and distinguished experts in the field, enriching our collective expertise and providing invaluable insights. Moreover, our commitment to internal reflection and continuous improvement was demonstrated through our Research Learning and Quality initiatives. These initiatives created platforms for CEPA staff to exchange ideas and

reflect on our work internally, ensuring high standards of research quality and fostering a culture of learning and innovation.

Strategically, under the guidance of the Executive Director, we introduced a new thematic area— Gender and Development—led by Ms. Nadhiya Najab, a long-standing and valued member of the CEPA team. This move underscores our commitment to recognizing and nurturing internal talent. The Sustainable Development thematic was rebranded as Natural Resources, Climate and Poverty, reflecting our broadened focus. We also expanded our capabilities in Agriculture and Economics by recruiting highly skilled individuals and securing significant projects pivotal to poverty research. CEPA's skill mix was balanced with addition of more staff with quantitative skills.

Aligning with our vision and mission, CEPA's strategic focus evolved to address the widespread poverty exacerbated by Sri Lanka's economic crisis. Our efforts influenced policy implementers to reconsider and refine strategies aimed at both micro and macro-level economic solutions to alleviate poverty.

Financially, CEPA recovered its administrative costs and yet we recorded a small profit of Rs. 494,746 despite a substantial salary increase for staff. CEPA recorded an overall surplus of Rs. 25 million in 2023. Thanks to the new management strategies, we have stabilized our operations and created an environment conducive to sustaining CEPA's status as a competitive and wellrecognized institution.

A highlight of the year was the CEPA Poverty Symposium held over two days in October 2023, titled "Poverty Alleviation in an Era of Economic Crisis." This symposium focused on topics including Economics, Agriculture, Gender, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Sustainable Development. Funded by the Asian Development Bank

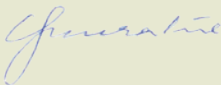
and The Asia Foundation, the event was a significant success, reaffirming CEPA's position as a leading think-tank in poverty research.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Herath Gunatilake for his exceptional leadership in stabilizing CEPA and reinforcing its role as a major stakeholder in poverty analysis in Sri Lanka. He has played a key role in liaising between the Board of Directors, and the management and staff, in revitalizing CEPA at a critical juncture for both the organization and the country.

My thanks also go to the Senior Leadership team for their support in implementing new initiatives and strategies, to the entire CEPA staff for their dedication, to our subscribing members, and not least, to the Board of Directors for their invaluable contributions. Their collective efforts have enabled CEPA to successfully navigate this challenging year and emerge stronger.

As we move forward, I am confident that with our resilient team and robust strategies, CEPA will continue to thrive and make significant contributions to poverty research and policy influence in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Camena Guneratne', is positioned above the printed name.

Prof. Camena Guneratne
Chairperson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Economic crisis that followed Covid-19 pandemic brought uncertainty about the future and unprecedented hardships for the Sri Lanka Society. Very high inflation eroded family incomes of the majority, and higher taxes added to the economic burden of the middle class. The effects of ill-fated organic farming drive and import restrictions left the farming community in a dire destitution. Wide-spread job losses and closing down of micro, small and medium enterprises magnified the effects of the crisis. Poverty incidents increased from 4% in 2016 to 26% by 2022. Some studies indicated the poverty level has increased to about 31% by mid 2023. Many economically productive families who lived just above the poverty line became poor. CEPA's challenges and corresponding responses in 2023 should be understood within this context.

CEPA had to adjust to the rapidly changing poverty situation in the country. Supporting and moving poor families out of poverty remained crucial while preventing the vulnerable groups becoming poor also came to the forefront. Inadequacy of micro-oriented qualitative approaches to alleviate mass-scale poverty during an unprecedented economic crisis, was felt. The need of a strategy, that recognizes the importance of an optimal mix of qualitative and quantitative assessments, which cover both micro and macroeconomic issues, was recognized. CEPA's human resources and research priorities were aligned with these ground realities.

Given the evolving poverty situation, priorities of the donor community and the available skill mix of CEPA, some initial steps were taken to: expand the livelihood and employment theme to have more work on agriculture and micro, small, and medium enterprises

(MSMEs); rename sustainable development theme as Natural Resource, Climate and Poverty; expand the work on gender and establish a new thematic group on Gender and Development; increase the use quantitative/statistical research methods to supplement qualitative research; and increase the use of quantitative economic analysis in CEPA research.

One of the critical challenges faced by CEPA is the resignation of a large number of staff in 2023. Ten staff including four heads of divisions resigned, mainly to go abroad for higher studies. Prevailed uncertainty about economic recovery and substantial increase in cost of living contributed to these resignations. The salary increase was insufficient as the economic situation drastically changed within few months after conducting the market survey for salary increase. Attempts to recruit experienced senior staff indicated that CEPA is not competitive enough in the labor market. The Board of Directors intervene at the request of the ED and an interim salary increase was implemented in the third quarter of the year. A strategy to recruit young, inexperienced graduates and train them under senior staff was adapted. Recruitment of two retired professors as thematic heads facilitated the implementation of this strategy. About 7 junior level staff were recruited and trained and another 3 junior level positions were budgeted for 2024. By the end of 2023 CEPA was ready with adequate human resources to embark on an exciting research program for 2024.

CEPA continued to serve its clients on contractual research work and also undertook its own research and outreach work. In 2023, CEPA's research portfolio included 29 projects of which 27 were either successfully completed, or continued for 2024. All these projects were directly or indirectly related to poverty, therefore, within the mandate of CEPA. Some of the projects made direct and significant impact on

the public policy. For example, "Economic Policy Research and Budgetary Analysis" project enabled CEPA staff to brief parliamentarians about the policy recommendations of the study. The Gap Analysis on Fishing Sector provided inputs for a national labor legislation to align it with ILO C188 (2007) convention. CEPA helped implementing gender mainstreaming activities in the curriculum development in four universities. The work on climate and conflict related to use of natural resources is an example of CEPA's work on emerging research themes. While working on more pressing issues, CEPA didn't overlook peace and reconciliation; it continued to work on Sri Lanka Barometer project and helped training the mediators working on land and financial disputes.

CEPA's blog was active in 2023 with 23 articles which covered diverse topics related poverty. Its research quality and learning (RQL) series conducted 5 events and research reflection an practice series organized 7 events. Culmination of the public engagement of CEPA in 2023 was the Poverty Symposium. CEPA was able to gather academics, professionals, and practitioners to brainstorm on poverty alleviation in an era of economic crisis. The event received wider coverage in print, visual and social media.

CEPA recovered its administrative cost as its net revenue increased by about 60% compared to 2022. Together with the unusually large gains from the development fund interests, CEPA recorded a surplus of Rs 25 million for 2023. ED sincerely thanks the Board of Directors who guided, supported and decisively intervened when the necessity arose. Credits of the achievements of CEPA goes to the CEPA staff who work very hard during the challenging year of 2023.



Herath Gunatilake
Executive Director



CEPA AT A GLANCE

CEPA was established in 2001 with the aim of working on poverty related issues. Founded with the intention of institutionalizing poverty analysis and poverty impact monitoring within the Sri Lankan civil society landscape, the organization was incorporated under Section 21 of the Companies Act as a company limited by guarantee. The catalyst for founding CEPA came from an assessment of the need for a special emphasis on applied policy advice based on factual information. CEPA sought to fill this void by providing practice-oriented services that were grounded in sound empirical research that responds to the needs of a constituency that included a variety of actors, such as, state, non-state, civil and community-based organizations.

Over the past 24 years, CEPA has succeeded in developing a body of knowledge on poverty to become the leading institution on poverty-related research in Sri Lanka. It has developed fresh and challenging perspectives on poverty; explored alternative dimensions; conducted in-depth analyses of specific poverty conditions; contributed to a better understanding of poverty in Sri Lanka and formulated policy initiatives to alleviate of poverty. CEPA has developed a research capacity with innovative research methodologies and practices. It has also contributed to the transfer of technology as CEPA's researchers have worked with partners in different parts of the world, while its services have been sought by numerous national and international organisations. CEPA's portfolio of work is a mix of projects that are based on CEPA's own research ideas and objectives as well as those that respond to the needs of the development partners. These projects are funded by carried out in collaboration with international organisations, NGOs, and government agencies. Regardless of the funding body or partnership, CEPA has always been insistent about not compromising on the integrity of its research.

CEPA's core belief is that poverty is an injustice that should be overcome, and that overcoming poverty involves changing policies and practices nationally and internationally, as well as working with people in poverty.

Vision - A world in which decision-making to eradicate poverty is based on non-partisan, robust evidence.

Mission - To be a leading organisation providing independent analysis of poverty, and its multi-faceted manifestations, with a view to shaping policy and practice in Sri Lanka and the region.

CEPA Values

Respect: CEPA values the contribution of all those who participate in and contribute to CEPA's work. We respect the rights, dignity, and potential of all those involved in our work.

Integrity: CEPA acts according to its mission – we are honest and transparent in what we do and say, and accountable for our collective and individual actions. Our work will always be guided by the principles of balance, independence, and impartiality.

Collaboration: At CEPA, we are committed to continuously sharing our knowledge and engaging with a wide range of people and institutions in order to achieve our goals.

Flexibility: CEPA strives to be flexible and will adapt to and accommodate changing or extenuating circumstances to best meet its mission and objectives



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS, 2023

Introduction

The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) continued its steady progress in 2023, navigating the challenges faced by the country and driving meaningful impact through its research and engagement across four key thematic areas: Social Protection and Basic Services, Sustainable Development (renamed Natural Resources, Climate, and Poverty), Livelihood and Employment, and Social Cohesion and Reconciliation and Labor Migration.

CEPA continued to build its research quality and capacity, with initiatives such as the Research Reflection and Practice Series, training programs, and the CEPA Staff Retreat. The staff retreat, held in Kandy, brought the team together to identify short to medium-term strategies for CEPA.

The CEPA Symposium held on November 29th and 30th, 2023, aimed to review poverty issues over time and address current and future challenges in measuring and combating poverty. The event attracted 170 participants per day, featuring resource persons, physical and online attendees, media representatives, and CEPA staff. Keynote speakers Dr. Indrajit Coomaraswamy and Dr. Rana Hasan highlighted Sri Lanka's economic challenges, emphasizing stability, growth, and productivity improvements for poverty reduction. The symposium included plenary sessions on successful policies, social protection systems, feminist perspectives, agricultural transformation, and MSMEs' role in recovery. Recommendations focused on holistic approaches, governance reforms, community involvement, and targeted crisis-related strategies. Discussions also delved into economic theory, emphasizing the need for policies to reduce inequality alongside economic growth. Despite challenges, CEPA

maintained its partnerships with various local and international organizations, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), The Asia Foundation (TAF), GIZ, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Westminster Federation for Democracy (WFD), and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). These collaborations have strengthened CEPA's impact and reach, allowing the organization to tackle critical development challenges.

Looking ahead, CEPA is well-positioned to continue its steady progress, leveraging its expertise, partnerships, and commitment to research quality and capacity building. As the organization navigates the evolving landscape, it remains steadfast in its mission to contribute to the development and well-being of the communities it serves.



*Stockholm
Environment
Institute (SEI)
Workshop.*



*Focus Group
Discussion - G7
Women, Peace
and Security
Partnerships
Initiative,
Monaragala.*

1. THEMATIC HIGHLIGHTS OF RESEARCH

CEPA had 29 research projects in its portfolio in 2023. Of these, 19 projects were successfully completed, 8 projects were carried forward and two projects were not completed. One World Bank funded project to train the government officials as trainers of the enumerators of Aswasuma program was cancelled due to a dispute between the government and relevant officials. The inequality project which has had difficult issues of conceptualization. Poor performance of consultants and lack of internal capacity to undertake the necessary analysis also contributed to the failure of the project. Table 1 provides the distribution of the project by the thematic groups.

Table 1: Distribution of research projects by thematic groups.

Thematic Group	Number of Projects	Number of projects completed	Number of projects carried forward
Basic Services and Social Protection	8	3	3
Sustainable Development	3	2	1
Livelihood and Employment	10	9	1
Labor Migration	1	1	-
Social Cohesion and Reconciliation	5	3	2
Gender and Development	2	1	1
Total	29	19	8

1.1 BASIC SERVICES & SOCIAL PROTECTION

CEPA has explored connections between poverty and services in several research and advisory studies. The services CEPA assessed include education, health, transport, social protection, water, and waste treatment on the aspects of access, quality, experience and outcomes to name a few. Our studies point to social protection policies being vital to reduce poverty and vulnerability across a person's life cycle, support inclusive and sustainable growth by raising household incomes, fostering productivity and human development and promoting decent work. Social protection programs in Sri Lanka are plagued with exclusion and inclusion errors which make them ineffective and wasteful. Moreover, the unequal access to health, education, transport, and natural resources such as land and water exacerbate the situation. These inequalities manifest in terms of ethnicity gender, regions are both result as well as causes of poverty.

The economic crisis pushed many vulnerable families to poverty highlighting the need to make social protection programs effective and efficient. The following summarizes the research work undertaken by basic services and social protection to support evidence-based policy interventions.

1.1.1 Gender Mainstreaming in Science and Technology Human Resource Development (STHRD) Project,

In 2023, Nadhiya Najab, served as the Gender Expert on behalf of the Ministry of Education in order to ensure the objectives outlined in the project's Gender Action Plan (GAP) were achieved. The monitoring of the project began in April 2022 and continued seamlessly into the following year. The STHRD Project is funded by the Asia Development Bank, and aims to develop the applied science and technology faculties at the universities of Sabaragamuwa, Rajarata,

Kelaniya, and Sri Jayewardenepura to produce technology-oriented graduates equipped with skills relevant in the current job market. The project is designed to provide innovative and advanced technology education and research facilities, help quality curriculum design and support academic staffing aligned with international standards and capacity development. The project is categorized Gender Equity (GEN), the highest categorization of gender in ADB-funded projects and has a Gender Action Plan that attempts to promote improved gender sensitivity and inclusion in the technology stream, and better employment opportunities for female graduates in non-traditional jobs.

As part of the monitoring and implementation process associated with the project trainings have been conducted for both academic and non-academic staff at the respective universities to introduce them to the concepts of gender equity. While interactions have been ongoing with the career development units to provide tailored assistance towards students pursuing careers in non-traditional or emerging sectors. In this year, the universities have also been encouraged to undertake school outreach programmes targeting secondary school students – female students in particular - to encourage them of the opportunities available. The project loan has been extended to June 2025 and the monitoring activities are expected to continue accordingly.

1.1.2 The Inequality Report (TIER) Project

CEPA's flagship initiative, "**The Inequality Report (TIER) Project**," faced initial delays, but the new team leader attempted to revise the concept and activities to ensure timely delivery of outputs. This project, an internal endeavor, planned to encompass the creation of an Inequality Report (TIER), factsheets, regional consultations, and social media content. These products will adopt a comprehensive approach to understand and tackle inequality. The project aims to enhance the understanding of this issue by integrating research, policy, and

dialogue. Over the project period, it was envisioned to evolve into a primary reference source on inequality for the country. Activities have commenced on conducting literature reviews, defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and developing factsheets. Additionally, work has begun on crafting communication strategies, designing the project's logo, and establishing a style guide for its deliverables.

The fact sheets have been finalized by the consultants, and the quality assurance consultant has reviewed and endorsed the content. A communications specialist who was engaged for this purpose has crafted the layout of the fact sheets. The thematic leader conducted research utilizing secondary data and published preliminary observations as blogs on CEPA's platform.

The ideas presented in these blogs were to be expanded upon through additional formal empirical research for future publication. The project, however, failed to deliver the inequality report by the end of the year. Faults in initial conceptualization, recruitment of non-performing consultants, ineffective organizational structure of the project were some of the reasons for the failure. Despite the efforts of the steering committee and ED, the project team didn't finish the report. The project funding team and the new head of the thematic group are developing a new proposal to continue this study.

1.1.3 Enumerator Training for Identifying the Poor

The economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka is estimated to have pushed nearly 3.9 million families into poverty. In this context, the Welfare Benefits Board of Sri Lanka, supported by UNDP and the World Bank, has introduced a welfare program titled 'Leave No One Behind' to support low-income families. CEPA was contracted to provide enumerator training for the data collection of this national

welfare benefits assessment project. Families who have registered for this scheme was supposed to be assessed based on a set of 22 indicators using a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) modality. The data collection was supposed to be carried out by 14,000+ DS division-based enumerators who will be assisted by district-based statistical officers (330) and development officers (660).

CEPA was expected to provide technical support, alongside the Department of Census and Statistics, to improve the survey tool; develop the training manual in Sinhalese and Tamil; train 30 master trainers from the Department of Census and Statistics and CEPA's expert pool of trainers; and produce video scripts containing data collection instructions in Sinhalese and Tamil for the use of ground-level enumerators. Upon the commencement of data collection, master trainers trained by CEPA were also expected to act in the capacity of trouble-shooters and the first line of defense for the 14,000 enumerators. Due to a dispute between the government and its ground level officers regarding assigning the responsibility of mistakes in selection of poor families, the project was not implemented.

1.1.4 Economic Policy Research and Budgetary Analysis

CEPA's Livelihood and Employment thematic undertook "Economic Policy Research and Budgetary Analysis" focusing on the transport and health sectors, aiming to inform policy decisions and improve service provision for the most vulnerable populations. To examine the effects of policy implementation gaps in the Health and Transport sectors on marginalized groups (including those marginalized based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disabilities/accessibility, and age), CEPA, commissioned by the Westminster Federation for Democracy (WFD), conducted a study on policy design and implementation gaps. This research aimed to bolster parliamentary oversight, enhance accountability, and promote inclusive practices in areas pertinent to Sri

Lanka's current political and economic challenges through evidence-based analysis. The project's output was a comprehensive final report containing policy recommendations. In addition to the policy analysis initiative, a complementary budgetary analysis was being conducted in the Health and Transport sectors.

CEPA participated in a workshop on participatory action research (PAR) organized by WFD. In addition to the two research projects, the CEPA team was part of this working group. Regarding the budgetary analysis, a preliminary analysis was conducted on the macro level of budget allocations for the Health and Transport sectors. The research team has been actively involved in policy lobbying with the findings of the first phase. The team has met with ministers of health and transport and other government officials of the two sectors to promote equitable services in health and transport.

In the project's second phase, CEPA concentrated on the Upcountry Tamil Population in Kandy, Hatton, Nuwara Eliya, and Badulla regions, and assessed their access to and the quality of transport and health services, as well as examined access of queer communities for the said services. Upon project completion, CEPA delivered a research report with policy suggestions aimed at fostering greater equity in these sectors. CEPA completed the two study reports and presented the findings at the launch event organized by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in October 2023. The findings and recommendations from these reports have also been presented and discussed at the Committee on Public Finance (COPF)- Parliament of Sri Lanka and tabled at the Parliament of Sri Lanka. As an outcome, CEPA was invited to be part of a working group alongside other civil society organisations to draft a proposal to address period poverty among school-going menstruating individuals, which was tabled in the Parliament.

1.1.5 Facilitating Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure in Emergency Social Protection Project (ESSP)

The World Bank financed an Emergency Social Protection Project (ESSP) aimed at supporting the implementation of cash transfers to alleviate poverty and vulnerability, enhance social protection systems, and promote economic opportunities for the poor and vulnerable. As per the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard (ESS 10) on "Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure," it was necessary to getting stakeholder feedback to understand the concerns of potentially affected or impacted individuals and groups. CEPA facilitated this by providing the consultation methodology, facilitation guidelines, and note-taking templates, and the final data analysis was completed in June, with subsequent addressing of comments.

1.1.6 Preliminary Assessment of Household Electricity Consumption as a Measure of Poverty

This research was completed using the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2019) data. The preliminary conclusion was that it is not possible to confidently recommend household electricity consumption as an appropriate measure of poverty, as the electricity consumption data was not accurate. Assessment was based on a recall question about electricity bill which was not accurate in the quantity of electricity consumed by the household. The outcome of the research was first presented in-house to CEPA staff. It was recommended that CEPA should undertake a validating study by collecting primary data. Presentation was also done, upon peer review of the draft paper, at an international symposium on Nutrition and Poverty, held in Kathmandu, Nepal, and at the Postgraduate Studies symposium at the University of Peradeniya to receive a feedback and design a better study. The presentation was awarded the best presentation on economics thematic at the Postgraduate Studies Symposium at University of Peradeniya.

1.1.7 Assessing the Determinants of Poverty

Proxy means test of income poverty vs multidimensional poverty indicators research was done with use of HIES (2019) data employing least square and logistic regression methods. It was found that several of the indicators utilized in measuring multidimensional poverty by the Department of Census and Statistics (2019) aligned closely with monetary poverty. The draft of the paper was completed. Factors determining poverty research topic has been done in the past but not recently. This study was undertaken using HIES (2019) data, particularly focusing on poverty in the estate sector. The initial analysis was completed based on a logit econometric model. Whilst most results confirm already known knowledge, some results are contradictory to the existing knowledge. Further detailed analysis is being pursued to enhance the understanding of poverty determinants in the estate sector.

1.1.8 Development of a Methodology to Estimate Multidimensional Household Livelihood Vulnerability Score: Ex-post of the Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) financed a study to develop a methodology to estimate a Livelihood Vulnerability Score for each household using socio-economic characteristics of the household. Utilizing household survey data collected in the aftermath of the crisis by UNDP Citizens' Survey with a representative sample of 25040 households, the study employs statistical methods to discern key factors contributing to livelihood vulnerability. Through a logistic regression framework, the study sheds light on the socioeconomic characteristics and circumstances that render certain households livelihood being more vulnerable, in the wake of crises. It was observed that about 70% of the households have a high livelihood vulnerability score of 0.8 and more. By utilizing estimated household livelihood vulnerability scores and implementing a

predefined threshold, it becomes feasible to identify vulnerable households, facilitating the implementation of targeted welfare benefit interventions.

1.1.9 Development of a Methodology for the Integration of Socio-Economic and Livelihood Indicators into Anticipatory Action Protocols to Mitigate Economic and Livelihood Crises

Anticipatory Action (AA) is crucial for mitigating the adverse impacts of hazards by enabling preventive measures that protect livelihoods before they strike. By leveraging early warning systems and advancements in disaster prediction, AA maximizes the window of opportunity between predicting and experiencing forecasted shocks. The core components of AA systems are an early warning system and a risk monitoring component. The early warning system is based on risk analysis and establishes specific trigger mechanisms for various hazards. It utilizes forecast information to activate these triggers when certain conditions are met, providing timely alerts that prompt the implementation of preventive actions. The risk monitoring component involves preparing for anticipatory actions as early warning indicators deviate from normal levels. It ensures that actions are taken when forecast data hits predefined thresholds, activating a warning alarm. This component focuses on safeguarding livelihoods by effectively allocating pre-arranged financial resources.

To address the drought vulnerability of agricultural livelihoods in Sri Lanka, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has tasked the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) with identifying socio-economic trigger indicators, thresholds, and mitigation activities. This development involves several key activities; focus group discussions (FGDs) in Puttalam, Anuradhapura, and Vavuniya districts, focusing on agricultural livelihoods such as paddy cultivation, dairy farming, and inland fisheries; and 81 in-depth household interviews.

The insights gained from this study will inform the final development of a robust AA protocol designed to protect Sri Lankan agricultural livelihoods from the impacts of drought by anticipating and acting on early warning signs.

1.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The global discourse on development continues to grapple with the challenge of sustainability to ensure inter-generational equity, which has been signified by depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation and the climate change. The objective of the thematic is to build a body of knowledge and generate evidence that creates a stronger lobby for a system change towards sustainable development. It will focus on system-wide drivers, that would mean going beyond reactive and symptom-related actions to exploring the root causes and connections; as well as improving the scientific and socio-economic base and institutional processes and interlinkages that need to be understood to deal with environmental problems. Additionally, the thematic will strive to push for a radical transformation in the existing value systems, in how we do business and how we lead our lives within the boundaries of natural limits.

1.2.1 Implementing Sustainable Development Goals in an Incoherent World: Aligning Climate Action and Reduced Inequalities

CEPA is part of a research consortium with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) to carry out a study that will explore the causes of policy incoherence and its consequences for the achievement of global climate and development goals and its impact on inequality. The project aims to shed light on how different national characteristics influence coherence and to make policy-oriented recommendations on

novel and coherent policy packages, as well as process design that enables cross-country policy learning to avoid exacerbating inequality as an outcome of incoherence. One of the outcomes is to develop tools that enable national governments to identify synergies and make transparent trade-offs in different political contexts. The team consists of researchers across 9 countries spanning the global North and South.

The team successfully completed the case study and policy brief, engaged in discussions on comparative studies led by SEI, presented at the ESG conference in October (online), and commenced work on a journal paper. One of the main activities in the year was a workshop on policy coherence carried out in collaboration with the Climate Change Secretariat. This workshop allowed a range of stakeholders to debate and discuss ways to improve policy coherence. This collaboration contributed valuable insights to enhance policy coherence, support sustainable development goals, and address inequalities through informed and coherent policymaking. The international collaboration itself was also a valuable partnership for CEPTA.

1.2.2 From Conflict and Poverty to Cooperation and Prosperity

The project aimed to implement technical and governance innovations to transform natural resource conflicts into peace and prosperity in rural Sri Lanka. Funded by the British High Commission Colombo under the Conflict Stability and Security Fund, the project was implemented by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in consortium with CEPA as the research and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) lead, and Chrysalis as the ground-level implementor. The project stems from a previous study done for the British High Commission and focusses on better management of natural resources as well as addressing any conflicts / tensions that may arise. Evidence shows that when there are interactions involving

climate shocks with non-climatic factors, such as pre-existing social, political and economic conditions there can be a potential for conflict. Often when the competition is for common pool resources -that are scarce, are ineffectively managed, existing conflicts and or new threats can arise.

This three-year project focuses primarily on impacts of water availability (droughts/floods) on agriculture in selected areas in the North and North-West Provinces. The project aims to demonstrate innovative, replicable and integrated bio-physical, livelihood and governance interventions to reduce inequality and conflict by building community and broader capacities to manage contested natural resource systems. Central to implementation will be a tripartite partnership between the project, focal communities and relevant layers of the government to collectively identify priorities and co-create and implement appropriate innovations.

In the 2nd year of implementation by using participatory processes the project selected a range of technological and social interventions – such as tank rehabilitation and establishing the management structure of the infrastructure in 16 GN divisions. CEPA was mainly focused on the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) deliverables of the project. As such, the project team carried out a baseline to record the initial conditions of the project locations; monitored the ground-level activities that were taking place; prepared reports on the various aspects of the projects such as the prioritisation of ground-level implementations of the project and the mobilisation process; and provided MEL input as needed during bi-weekly update meetings and quarterly review meetings with the consortium. Aside from the MEL deliverables, CEPA also worked with the project's Communications Officer in producing six (6) videos (at the final stage of production) which narrated stories of various stakeholders of the project. This

project offers a great opportunity to explore how Climate Change and Conflict and how it should be managed while also offering a chance to engage in long term work in a consortium.

1.2.3 Progress review of the "Oceans 5 project".

CEPA collaborated with the Fisheries and Policy Programme of Blue Resources Trust (BRT) to conduct a one-day workshop aimed at assessing the progress of the "Oceans 5 project". CEPA's role involved reviewing literature, designing a review structure and carrying out a reflection with the team. CEPA facilitated a one-day workshop with the project's staff to assess progress and identify strategies for improvement and future work.

On a linked note as part of the Oceans 5 project BRT is working with the Centre for Smart Futures (CSF) to develop a Sustainable Financing Plan for Marine Protected Areas in Sri Lanka This is a research and advocacy initiative to increase the understanding and effective application of innovative financing solutions for marine conservation. A series of multi stakeholder dialogues and feedback sessions are organized towards this initiative. CEPA was also invited to be on the working group to provide inputs towards development of a roadmap for innovative financing. Ms Nadiya Azmy has been engaged with this process and has provided regular inputs that are also reflected in the follow- up reports prepared by CSF/BRT.

1.2.4 Hosting the UNEP-funded Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum

CEPA served as the local host for Stakeholders Forum, which took place on October 3rd, 2023, ahead of the Fifth Asia Pacific Forum of High Authorities and Ministers of Environment from October 4th to 6th, 2023. This event provided a platform to facilitate collective

perspectives on sustainable development from various stakeholder groups in the region. The meeting was funded by UNEP. The stakeholder forum brought together over 50 CSOs stakeholders from across the Asia Pacific region to prepare collective views and positions on the UNEA 6 theme and regional inputs. These deliberations and statements were used to provide views of the major groups and grassroots communities at the senior officials and ministerial forum and side-events that followed. These ideas get reflected in the outcome of the 5th Asia Pacific Forum, and other inputs to the UNEA process including draft resolutions and draft Ministerial Declaration.

CEPA supported the Asia Pacific CSO engagement mechanism to organize the stakeholder forum by being part of the workshop organising team and as a participant. During the forum CEPA supported the facilitation of the forum and inputted into the final statement. Karin Fernando was also a panelist at a side event on Karin Fernando was also a panelist at a side event on “Accelerating the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework” on 5 October during the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

1.3 LIVELIHOOD AND EMPLOYMENT

Building on CEPA’s existing body of knowledge on livelihoods, this thematic continues to analyse changing global and national trends, policies and processes and strives to understand the lived realities of those who are left behind by these processes. These processes include automation supplemented by artificial intelligence along global value chains, as well as some national economic development plans. While strategies to ensure growth, productivity and competitiveness are set out in paper in State policies, ensuring inclusiveness is less clear in government policy. A clear understanding of processes of inclusivity and exclusion is important within a political-economic discourse

where the government will continue to cut down social expenditure. These will have an impact on the quality of health, education and social protection related benefits and services that citizens receive, which in turn will have a serious negative impact on the poor.

CEPA's past work in the estates, urban, rural areas, and directly war affected areas highlight horizontal inequalities producing forms of insecure employment that are susceptible to an unsustainable precarity. These workers face barriers with regards to education, geography, networks of influence, environmental and resource pressure. They are marginalised at intersecting social identities of ethnicity, class and caste. They are often trapped within rigid curricula that prepare them for careers that are no longer viable. This thematic will continue to focus on these groups and study the impact of changing nature of work and their impact on poor people's lives.

1.3.1 Gap Analysis and Consultation Support of National Fishing Sector Labour Legislation and Infrastructure Requirement Against ILO C 188 (2007) Convention

The fisheries sector plays a key role in Sri Lanka's economy, contributing to over 6.5% of the country's employment and accounting for 2% of the total exports. It provides a key protein source for much of the country, contributing to ensuring food security. Despite the significance of the sector, fishing remains a sector characterized by irregular and risky work conditions. Additionally, with increased mechanization, fishing vessels spend longer time periods at sea raising concerns regarding adequate accommodation facilities, sanitation, health care etc. Since employment in the fisheries sector is predominantly informal, adequate social protection and occupational safety mechanisms that address the risks involved in it are largely lacking.

The ILO Convention C 188 – Work in Fishing (2007) which entered into force on the 16th of Nov 2017 addresses some of these gaps by promoting decent work conditions in the fisheries sector. It provides provisions regarding minimum requirements of work on board, conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health, medical care and social security. Sri Lanka is yet to ratify this convention. As a first step to encourage ratification, ILO conducted a study which identified the benefit fishers, boat owners and other stakeholders as well as the fisheries industry as a whole would accrue from ratification of this convention. In 2021, Upon presenting the findings of this study to the Government of Sri Lanka, ILO was of the view to explore the possibility to carry out a gap analysis of National legislation and Infrastructure Requirement against the requirement of the ILO C188 Convention (2007). The gap analysis, conducted by CEPA, aimed to help Sri Lanka move forward with the ratification process by providing guidance on how existing legislation and infrastructure can be changed or complemented to comply with the provisions of the Conventions. After successfully completing the legal gap analysis including conducting regional workshops in eight fisheries districts, CEPA presented the findings of the GAP analysis to key government and civil society representatives. Further, a road map for C188 ratification was also developed and shared with the key officials from Ministry of Fisheries, Department of Fisheries and Department of Labour. The final version of the Gap Analysis report to the ILO was submitted in May 2023.

1.3.2 Establishing Research, Advocacy, and Policy Parameters for the Ratification of the ILO Convention C 188 (2007) in Sri Lanka,

Building on previous efforts, and after completing the legal gap analysis and providing consultation support for the National Fishing Sector Labour Legislation and Infrastructure Requirements against the ILO C 188 (2007) Convention, the ILO collaborated with CEPA again

to initiate the final phase of this project. The goal was to support the government in operationalizing the action plan and ratifying the ILO C188 Working in Fishing Convention in Sri Lanka. During this final phase of the project, CEPA's role was to provide the technical guidance to the working group appointed by the Ministry of Fisheries (MoF) to implement the action plan towards ratification of the ILO C188 working in Fishing Convention. The CEPA research team provided essential guidance to the working group formed by the Ministry of Fisheries, with the support of Minister of Labour, to implement the action plan towards ratification. The minimal and progressive provisions were identified at the initial stage. Afterwards, the legal consultant provided the technical assistance to the legal officers of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to draft regulations on working in fishing. Moreover, the Ministry of Fisheries conducted ten regional awareness sessions for boat owners, skippers, and crew, introducing the draft regulations and seeking their feedback. To facilitate these regional awareness workshops, the CEPA research team conducted a training program for government officials directly involved in the sessions, introducing them to Convention C188. Following the regional workshops, the draft regulations were finalized, and the completed draft was handed over to the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Labour in December 2023.

1.3.3 Workshop on "Oceans 5 project".

CEPA collaborated with the Fisheries and Policy Programme of Blue Resources Trust (BRT) to conduct a one-day workshop aimed at evaluating the achievements and shortcomings of the "Oceans 5 project". CEPA's role involved reviewing literature and designed a structure to carry out the review. CEPA facilitated a one-day workshop with the project's staff to assess progress and identify

strategies for improvement. CEPA researcher Nadiya Azmy participated in a knowledge roundtable on Marine Conservation Financing, organized by the Centre for a Smart Future. This consultative process aimed to share knowledge on financing instruments and develop a sustainable financing plan for Marine Protected Areas in Sri Lanka with the larger goal of promoting a economic recovery that puts nature at the core.

1.3.4 Indian Ocean Transregional Planning Grant

Another project in the Fisheries sector, allowed CEPA and the research consortium to set its own research agenda. This was done through a seed grant funded by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) - titled 'Indian Ocean Transregional Planning Grant'. This convened an international, interdisciplinary group of scholars who conduct research on fisheries across four Indian Ocean (IO) countries - India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Kenya. Collectively, this endeavour developed a comparative project that investigated emerging economic and environmental changes in the region, and explored how these are mediated by intersectional social relations, such as gender, ethnicity/race, caste, class, and place. The overarching research question tries to understand how different regional social economies of fisheries in the IO shape possibilities for adaptation to rupture.

We iteratively collected, qualitative data through individual in-depth interviews, participant observations and focus group discussions to comparatively research five seafood market spaces in Negombo, Sri Lanka to understand the impacts of these sudden and slow-onset shocks as lived experiences. Our data collection took place from May 2022 to March 2023. Through individual histories, using social network analysis and delving into experiences of collectives and governance structures in the community, we studied how groups of women continue to hold space in these markets, by creating spaces of

their own, parallel to those that they are being excluded from.

In addition, CEPA received a communications grant from SSRC. This grant facilitated the synthesis of key findings from studies conducted by the five research groups and the creation of various communication outputs. These included social media posts and illustrations. A dedicated website was developed to host project details and findings.

1.3.5 Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) Data Collection Project in Sri Lanka.

The assessment aimed to increase understanding of the current state plastic pollution related to marine fisheries and to establish the prevalence of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) around Sri Lanka. CEPA was sub-contracted by Evolved Research Pvt, Ltd for this research funded by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) UK, to organize a data collection campaign on Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) and end of life (EOL) fishing gear in Sri Lanka. The work is funded through the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) delivered under the Blue Planet Fund. It builds on the Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLiP) and contributes to the UK government's aid strategy for developing countries.

CEPA conducted a comprehensive survey of 650 respondents representing all vessel types from 10 coastal provinces of Sri Lanka, in two phases in 2023. The first phase of data collection was completed in April in five coastal locations, and the final phase was completed in October to November in another five locations. In addition to the data collection, CEPA hosted a series of regional workshops in Galle, Negombo, Jaffna, and Trincomalee, targeting fisher communities. These workshops aimed to disseminate the findings of the research,

highlighting the status of ALDFG in Sri Lanka and its impact on the environment and livelihoods. CEPA collaborated with Evolved Research Consulting Ltd (ERC) and CEFAS to host a national workshop on 23rd November 2023 in Colombo, with the participation of government, non-government, and international organizations. This workshop focused on disseminating the findings from phase 1 and fostering meaningful dialogue on the subject toward identifying practical solutions. Currently, the team is working on hosting a final national workshop on disseminating the findings from both phase 1 and phase 2 in July 2024, bringing together government, private, and non-government sector stakeholders.

1.3.6 The Care Economy and Decent Work in Sri Lanka's Future of Work

This research, commissioned by the ILO, attempted to understand the existing context of the care economy in Sri Lanka with a particular focus towards children and elderly, looking at formal and informal providers of care. Care work is broadly defined as “activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological and emotional needs of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied”. The research is situated in a context where care responsibilities towards children and elders are predominantly borne by women. As the population ages and the working-age population shrinks, concerns arise regarding the availability of formal support systems to assist with the care responsibilities. It becomes necessary to understand the demands for care work outside the sphere of private unpaid work in order to be able to respond to future needs and ensure decent and sustainable work, with adequate support to institutions that already help in caring for vulnerable segments of our population. The research examined the existing legal and policy environment and practices related to care work; mapped care services provided by the organized sector and identified the structure of care services provided

at a household level. This research attempted to identify existing decent work deficits that exist particularly in the formal/organized sector engaged in the provision of care services. It also forecasted trends of demand and supply of care in the formal and informal economy up to 2030, in order to make concrete and feasible recommendations on the future of work in the care sector in Sri Lanka. The team combined both primary and secondary qualitative information with quantitative analysis to propose recommendations that recognize the shifting care needs and how these needs can be met effectively. A blog article and a factsheet were prepared to disseminate the study findings. The report is to be formally launched by the ILO in the following year.

1.3.7 Small Businesses, Big Impacts: COVID-19, SMEs, and Fair Recovery

In the aftermath of the pandemic, coping mechanisms of the affected populations became an important research topic. CEPA was selected as a part of a Research Consortium designing and implementing a regional study titled ‘Small Businesses, Big Impacts: COVID-19, SMEs, and Fair Recovery’ to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSME) in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. The study was jointly implemented by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan and Centre for Policy Research (CPR), India and is funded by Southern Voice. The purpose of this study was to understand the effects of pandemic on micro and small businesses, business owners and employees, and the government/policy and/or enterprise responses to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

This study was expected to contribute to developing a country case study as well as a joint regional study and employed both qualitative and quantitative components. The effects of the pandemic on Sri

Lanka's MSME sector, gendered impacts of the pandemic on entrepreneurs, and policy support made available to firms were screened through an extensive review of the secondary literature available. National datasets, including the Labour Force Survey and the COVID-19 Survey 2020 - obtained from the Department of Census and Statistics were analyzed in order to identify labour force trends that preceded the COVID-19 pandemic as well as those which followed the pandemic. The primary survey component of the study, developed by the Research Consortium alongside qualitative data collection tools, consisted of covering 60 MSMEs belonging to food, apparel, construction, and IT sectors located in Colombo and Hambantota districts. Based on the analyses of primary and secondary data, a 15,000-word report was produced by Southern Voice on how critically the pandemic has affected MSMEs in Sri Lanka. In addition, the team published a blog titled "How Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Sri Lanka Upgraded their Services during COVID-19". Given the critical impacts of the political economic crisis that the MSMEs faced in 2022-2023, CEPA conducted a brief follow up survey on a sub-set of the same MSMEs to understand challenges they were facing and coping mechanisms. These findings and recommendations formed the basis of a parallel session at the CEPA Annual Symposium 2023 titled 'Survival of MSMEs as a Strategy for Economic Recovery'.

1.3.8 Resilience of a Key European Supply Chain (the European - South Asian apparel Production Network)

The world economy has become increasingly reliant on the organisation of global supply chains, with industries such as apparel leading the way (World Bank 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic made visible many of the key vulnerabilities of global lead firms, local suppliers and workers at the heart of these globally integrated systems of production. Supply chains have been disrupted,

orders were reduced and cancelled, factories were closed, and workers have lost jobs. This project examined the post-COVID-19 context to shed light on the implications of the pandemic for the organisations providing work and the workers, the majority of whom are women to understand how they have coped with and responded to the implications of these changes of work and employment conditions. In Sri Lanka, the project is particularly interested in individuals who work for companies such as MAS, Hirdaramani, Brandix, Hela Clothing, Star Garments and Next. The project was also undertaken in Bangladesh. For this project CEPA played a predominantly managerial role of assisting the Principle Investigator Shyamain Wickramasinghe to facilitate data collection, conduct stakeholder consultation workshops and engagement activities. The project's principal investigator conducted interviews with individuals from the apparel sector in the Biyagama and Katunayake Export Processing Zones. Subsequently, a validation workshop was held at CEPA, where representatives from the labor unions were invited to review the key findings and provide feedback, which was documented for further analysis and consideration.

1.3.9 Productivity and Input Use Efficiency Enhancement of Maize–Legume Cropping System

FAO engaged ED as a consultant to prepare a report on the maize sector, drawing from a workshop in Anuradhapura and secondary data on the industry. Collaborating with two other consultants, ED submitted the final report approximately three weeks after the workshop. The report outlined a range of interventions aimed at revitalizing the maize sector, transitioning it into an economically viable, financially profitable, and environmentally sustainable industry that supports over 50,000 farm families in the dry and intermediate zones of Sri Lanka. FAO endorsed the recommendations presented in the report and proceeded to develop a project proposal based on these insights. The

proposal was submitted to the European Union. This project provides small amount revenue for CEPA, but it build a solid partnership with FAO for future collaborations. Towards the end of the year FAO sole selected CEPA for the larger project on anticipatory actions of disaster risk reduction.

1.3.10 Nexus between Digitalization and the Increase in Household Debt Among Women Workers in the Gig Economy in Asia and the Pacific

Research conducted on the gig economy in general mainly focuses on the global north and selected countries of the global south. The scope and potential of the gig economy in Sri Lanka and the distribution of labour within it is yet to be fully understood. The opportunities presented through the digital economy are in their infancy in Sri Lanka. As a consequence, the potential challenges that have emerged with a growing digital economy may not have been identified to the fullest effect. The slow digital uptake, limited in geographic scope and scale due to infrastructure limitations means that there is a lot yet unknown.

In order to bridge this gap, particularly gendered implications of the gig economy, the research team at CEPA proposed a study which was exploratory in nature to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD) in order to understand the opportunities available for women users of digital platforms and possible links with indebtedness as a consequence – whether it is a means of reducing indebtedness or results in increasing incidents of indebtedness. It was thought useful to understand the opportunities available for women in particular to utilize the shift for income generation activities through accessing digital economy. This was also an opportunity to gauge one's understanding of decent work opportunities or understand the alternatives available. CEPA looked at two case studies in particular; MSMEs in Hambantota that adopted the use of digital platforms

during COVID-19 in an effort to expand the reach of their businesses and women engaged in food-based delivery platforms (Uber and PickMe) as a source of income generation. The team presented preliminary findings (virtually) to research partners of APWLD and eventually produced a detailed report outlining the complete study findings. The research team intend to rework the report for a journal submission in the following year.

1.4 LABOUR MIGRATION

Despite rapid changes taking place within outward and inward labour migration, their implications are not yet clearly understood in Sri Lanka. Similarly, the constant mobility of internal migrant workers and the underlying implications of their migratory patterns are largely ignored in both policy and research. This includes the more opaque elements such as the presence of human trafficking, labour exploitation, discriminatory government policies and the more visible, yet ignored elements of impact on household economy, the right to mobility and decent work. While a considerable amount of work is being carried out at the national level regarding external labour migration, research and practice have not kept pace with these changes. In this context, studying the socio-economic and political underpinnings of labour migration in, from and to Sri Lanka is important.

1.4.1 The study on Digital Remittances

This study aims to shed light on the blind spots regarding financial inclusion in the digital remittance sector. This collaborative study was undertaken by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Specifically, the study will explore how the pandemic has changed the usage of digital remittance services and how it has favoured the development of

certain services (e.g., mobile money). Migration Policy Institute (MPI) of United States contracted CEPA to carry out a series of consultations with key stakeholders and communities on the use of digital remittances. The consultations involve two tasks: (1) conduct focus group discussions on digital remittance services, and (2) identify and interview relevant public officials and private sector representatives on remittances and digital money transfers.

Our team prioritized gathering diverse perspectives on the use and non-use of digital remittance methods, conducting Key Person Interviews with government, non-government, and civil society representatives. We also organized 4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with both users and non-users of digital remittances. The FGDs were segregated by language and collaborated with the Voice of Migrants Network to recruit participants. The team carefully documented the discussions and shared the reports with the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) representative.

1.5 SOCIAL COHESION AND RECONCILIATION

The social cohesion and reconciliation thematic has a strong interest in understanding the dialogue between social cohesion, peace and conflict mechanisms and horizontal inequalities. A sub theme for this project is conflict and poverty. The team continues to focus on seeking possible funders and writing proposals for grants and establishing collaborations.

1.5.1 Sri Lanka Barometer – Phase 2" project

CEPA made significant progress in its partnership with GIZ, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, and CEPA to establish a consortium focused on engaging multiple stakeholders in Sri Lanka to support research on deepening the understanding and expectations towards reconciliation and progress

towards it through the "Sri Lanka Barometer – Phase 2" project. An enhanced evidence base will be used to inform public discourse in the short and medium term and contribute to political decision making and resource allocation in the long term. This partnership and related activities will be supported by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Foreign Office.

In December 2021, CEPA had successfully completed the first phase of this project, and the second phase involved conducting bi-annual quantitative surveys, annual mini surveys, thematic qualitative studies, discussion papers, and dialogue and communication engagements. The team was actively involved in building the survey, designing and hosting the launch program, and providing input to the media plan. In August, the team completed a gap analysis of the barometer survey findings and began work on finalizing the translations of the 2023 survey. The team launched an island-wide call for submissions for the Young Researchers Program from which seven individual researchers and one team of researchers were selected to conduct research in the 8 domains within the Sri Lanka Barometer. Eight mentors representing a wide range of sectors relevant to each research domain were invited to be a part of the project to supervise the young researchers. The main output of this project is to collate the eight research papers and publish them as a book with editorial input from both CEPA and GIZ. The project will be completed in March 2025.

1.5.2 A Final Independent Evaluation of “Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Sri Lanka Project”.

With funding from the Government of Japan, UN Women in partnership with Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment, began the project “Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Sri Lanka (G7 Women, Peace and Security Partnerships Initiative)” in January 2020. The project aimed

to empower women including those in vulnerable situations, to strengthen the peacebuilding process and social cohesion in Sri Lanka including through implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS). The project sought to ensure that peacebuilding initiatives in Sri Lanka leverage women's capacities and contributions and develop strategies for inclusion which recognize their roles and diverse experiences of conflict

The evaluation conducted aimed to provide valuable insights to support evidence-based decision-making, demonstrate accountability to donors and stakeholders, inform and guide future peacebuilding programming at UN Women Sri Lanka and the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The evaluation findings were intended engaging women in peacebuilding as a means to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, diffusing triggers of violence, as proposed by the project.

The inception report was finalized following a consultation organized by UN Women and key project stakeholders, including Chrysalis and the Women's Bureau. Data collection activities were carried out in selected project implementation sites, and valuable insights were gathered through consultations with project stakeholders. A presentation on the preliminary findings of the evaluation was delivered to the UN Women team in Sri Lanka and regionally, as well as to an external review group comprising key project stakeholders. Subsequently, the final evaluation report was complemented with a Knowledge Sharing Innovative Programme Learning Document as well as an Evaluation Findings Brief.

1.5.3 Assessment and Mediation of Financial Disputes

CEPA has been contracted by The Asia Foundation to carry out an assessment of financial disputes in Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa,

Kandy, Monaragala, Colombo and Gampaha districts to support the development of the scope of Special Mediation Boards (Financial Disputes). The study aims to understand the nature and types of small-scale financial disputes, identify parties to the disputes and the mechanisms used by the parties to settle such disputes. The study is also expected to generate recommendations to introduce mediation to resolve small-scale financial disputes.

The study team held a consultation with the Mediation Boards Commission and Mediation Training Officers to garner their support and secure the participation of their field-level officers in the research. As a result of these efforts, the team successfully completed the fieldworks in all six districts, gathering valuable data and insights from a wide range of sources. Following the completion of the fieldworks, the team presented the findings of the study to the Asia Foundation, Ministry of Justice, Mediation Boards Commission, and other key stakeholders. The study report was finalized and submitted to the Asia Foundation, ensuring that the findings and recommendations were shared with all relevant parties.

1.5.4 Assessment and Mediation of Land Disputes

CEPA was contracted by The Asia Foundation (TAF) to carry out a rapid assessment of land disputes in the Uva Province- Monaragala and Badulla districts in May 2023, to support the development of the scope of Special Mediation Boards (Land Disputes). The study aimed to understand the nature and types of small-scale land disputes, identify parties to the disputes and the mechanisms used by the parties to settle such disputes. The study generated recommendations to introduce and strengthen mediation to resolve small-scale land related disputes in the Uva Province. The team completed data collection in the Monaragala and Badulla districts, analyzed the data, and produced a report. After final report submission, findings and recommendations

were presented to TAF and subsequently to the Ministry of Justice and Mediation Boards Commission in October 2023.

1.5.5 Study on Intersectional Justice in Sri Lanka and Lebanon

CEPA has been a part of University of Bath's MENASP (Middle East and North Africa Social Policy Network) since 2015. The MENASP network aims to contribute to the development of greater capacity for effective social policy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, in terms of the generation of research and its utilisation by decision-makers. The area of research was considered pivotal in understanding contemporary politics in the region from a comparative lens and as such the network decided to provide a smaller grant to carry out the research. CEPA will be taking the lead on the paper analyzing Intersectional Justice in Sri Lanka in the context of the recent crises while the American University of Beirut (AUB) will take the lead on doing the same in the context of Lebanon. The two research teams will work together with researchers from University of Bath to author a comparative paper synthesizing the two studies which will be published in journals. The joint proposal submitted by CEPA, AUB and University of Bath passed the ethics review in July. However signing of the final contract has been delayed due to the summer vacation schedules of the donor organization and other reasons. The project was commenced in 2024 after the signing of contracts in February 2024.

1.6. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

A new thematic group on Gender and Development was created to better reflect CEPA's work on Gender and also to expand the work on gender in relation to poverty. Nadhiya Najab was appointed as the leader of the thematic group. The gender and development thematic cuts across every thematic area of work at CEPA. It will contribute towards ensuring that our research and resultant policy recommendations continue to be

holistic, mindful and sustainable, with a conscious effort made to incorporate gender as one of the many intersections of poverty and development in addition to factors such as religion, ethnicity, caste, class and other socio-economic considerations. In a context where the emphasis on gender equality and social justice is growing, the thematic will draw from CEPAs experience, to lend a nuanced understanding of the gendered impacts of poverty in both new and existing areas of study. Two new studies were initiated under the new thematic.

1.6.1 "Period Poverty: Driving Change for Inclusive Menstrual Health and Empowerment"

Shanthi Maargam together with the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka and the Embassy of France in Sri Lanka and the Maldives is working towards making a significant impact for all menstruating individuals as part of a project entitled, "Period Poverty: Driving Change for Inclusive Menstrual Health and Empowerment". The aim of this project is to improve menstrual health and hygiene; end menstrual stigma and discrimination; realize human rights to water and sanitation; address the lack of adequate Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities schools and communities; and change societal perceptions on menstruation. The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) was approached to undertake a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) research study to provide the foundational data necessary to assist Shanthi Maargam to successfully implement the project within the low-income areas in the Colombo district. The CEPA team has undertaken a preliminary literature review which has informed the development of the draft data collection tools which will be submitted to the Ethics Review Committee for Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Colombo prior to proceeding with data collection in the following year.

1.6.2 Impacts of Electricity Price Increase on Households: Targeting Poor and Vulnerable for Designing Relief Measures

This ADB funded study will undertake a survey of 2500 households across 12 Districts to assess the impact of higher electricity prices on poor and as well as to understand the coping strategies of the households as a consequences of the higher energy prices. The study findings will be used to design some form of social protection for poor and vulnerable, who, otherwise will have to give up the use of electricity. As a part of the study, approximately 120 womenheaded businesses will also be interviewed to understand the effect of higher electricity prices. Special attention will be paid to study the feasibility of using solar power.

Moreover, smart metering to get rid of the reconnection charges, and prepaid metering to minimise disconnection from the electricity supply will also be studied. As a part of this study, the feasibility of using electricity consumption to measure poverty will also be assessed. If the study provides strong statistical evidence, it will help poverty monitoring with a low-cost measure and provide a good tool for graduation from the social protection programs. The research proposal for this project was submitted to the ADB, while the draft questionnaire and sampling frame was prepared. ADB was not able to process the contract before December 2023. The project will begin in 2024.



*Supporting Effective
Dispute Resolution -
(SEDR) Event.*



*Focus Group Discussion - Westminster
Federation for Democracy (WFD).*



2. OTHER ACTIVITIES

In addition to the research CEPA undertook variety of activities. These activities include research quality and learning, training and capacity development, poverty symposium, communications and variety of events organized by CEPA as well as attended by CEPA staff.

2.1 RESEARCH QUALITY & LEARNING

CEPA's emphasis on research quality and learning is an ethical imperative that stems from our commitment to generate knowledge that advances social and economic justice.

The Research Quality and Learning (RQL) support function is committed to continuously enhance our capacity to creatively and rigorously develop, interpret, and apply theory and method. Thus, RQL enables all researchers at CEPA to consciously set, and continuously review standards and learning in pursuit of a research praxis that is ethically grounded and politically informed.

Throughout the year 2023, the RQL function continued with regular sessions to address issues related to ongoing research and to support the researchers through capacity development sessions (Table 2). It was also a medium to share knowledge.

Table 2: RQL Sessions in 2023

Date	Resource Person & Designation	Title
14 th March 2023	Dr. Herath Gunatilake – Executive Director	Environmental Valuation for Informed Decision Making
19 th April 2023	Gayathri Manori – Head of Finance	Budgeting & Project Management from a Finance Perspective
23 rd May 2023	Karin Fernando, Senior Research Professional and Thilini De Alwis, Research Professional	Climate and SDG work (SEI Workshop)
01 st June 2023	Dr. Herath Gunathilake – Executive Director	The Division of Labor Between the Market and the Government

2.2 RESEARCH REFLECTION & PRACTICE (RRP) SERIES

Is an initiative by the Training and Capacity Building arm to impart skills and knowledge from external experts to internal staff. These strategic sessions aim to cultivate a culture of reflection among CEPA staff through interactive engaging knowledge forums chaired by experts. This guest lecture series was started from September 2022. These strategic sessions aim to cultivate a culture of reflection among CEPA staff. This activity involves developing an external training portfolio for CEPA - as a separate arm. Some of these guest lectures are also opened to the public allowing us to and share and learn from

the platform of knowledge at large. In 2023 we were able to conduct 13 RRP lectures totaling 17 in all (Table 3).

The lecture series also engaged CEPA members (some of whom are senior academics) to give their expertise on a subject related matter on the process of learning and research. The presentations were also uploaded on YouTube and are available to the public.



Dr. Nadeera Rajapakse - Bringing Culture into Development

University Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne

RRP- Guest Lecture 13

Table 3: Research Reflection & Practice Sessions in 2023

Date	RRP Guest Lecture	Resource Person	Title
13 th Jan 2023	No 5	Prof Dileni Gunawardane - Chair Professor in Economics, University of Peradeniya	Using a Gender Lens in Economic Analysis
09 th Feb 2023	No 6	Prof. Maneesha Wanasinghe, Senior Professor International Relations, Department of International Relations, University of Colombo	Victims, Perspectives, Trauma and its Aftermath
17 th March 2023	No 7	Dr. Sunil Bastian - Development Specialist and Former Executive Director - CEPA	Challenges of Post-colonial State Formation in Sri Lanka

20 th April 2023	No 8	Dr. Neavis Morias - Senior Lecturer - Department of Social Studies and Former Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities of the The Open University of Sri Lanka	Reflections on Livelihood Research
11 th May 2023	No 9	Dr. Derek Heady - Senior Research Fellow - Development Strategies and Governance Division, International Food Policy Research Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka	Nutrition as a Basic Need
17 th May 2023	No 10	Dr. Benjamin Schwab - Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics Kansas State University, Fulbright Scholar at the University of Peradeniya	An Overview of Causal Inference Methods and a Discussion of Implications for Policy Research and Program Evaluation in Sri Lanka

28 th June 2023	No 11	Prof. Hemasiri Kotagama - Team Leader - Basic Services & Social Protection - CEPA	Overview of Aswasuma Poverty Alleviation Scheme
06 th July 2023	No 12	Dr. Herath Gunathilake Executive Director - CEPA	Public Policy: The Division of Labor Between the Market and the Government
19 th July 2023	No 13	Dr. Nadeera Rajapakse Assistant Professor, History of Economic Thought Research Department - University Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne	Bringing Culture into Development
24 th August 2023	No 14	Nulakshi Dissanayake and Hemasiri Kotagama - Basic Services & Social Protection - CEPA	A Preliminary Empirical Assessment on Alternative Proxies for Poverty Measurement

25 th September 2023	No 15	Ms. Linda Ehrichs Head of Cooperation at the High Commission of Canada to Sri Lanka	Researching the ethics of identity use in political mobilization
26 th September 2023	Special Webinar jointly with Sociology Alumni	Dr. Herath Gunathilake Executive Director - CEPA	ආර්ථික අර්බුදය, දරිද්‍රතාවය සහ සමාජ ආරක්ෂණය SAAUC- CEPA Joint webinar
02 nd October 2023	No 16	Dr. Jayantha Perera Former Principal Safeguard Specialist - ADB	Resettlement, Livelihood Restoration and Poverty

2.3 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In the year under review, the training and capacity building arm of CEPA concentrated on developing an external training portfolio for CEPA, as well as internal staff capacity building.

Applied Qualitative Research Methodology

A partnership with the Faculty of Arts – University of Colombo is in the process of development. The partnership is supported by the Department of Sociology and the Department of International Relations of the University of Colombo. The envisioned collaboration encompasses a spectrum of initiatives aimed at fostering mutual growth and academic excellence. Among these are the exploration of

partnership in offering certificate and short courses in Applied Research Methodology, Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methodology, and other specialized training programs. Additionally, Both institutions agree to explore the possibilities of cooperation in one or more of the following within the discipline's of Sociology, International Relations, Economics, Geography, Demography, and other mutually benefiting areas. A key focus of this collaboration is the encouragement of joint research projects addressing critical issues related to poverty including but not limited to rural and urban development, economic growth and poverty impacts, globalization and poverty, migration studies, non-market failures (government) failures and poverty, agricultural development, natural resources and environmental management. Furthermore, the partnership emphasizes the exchange of research findings, publications, and reports to related to the above mentioned areas. Copyright will be mutually shared for publications. This evolving partnership signifies a significant step towards fostering academic synergy and advancing knowledge dissemination in a collaborative and impactful manner.

In February 2023, Search For Common Grounds (SFCG) undertook a **comprehensive capacity assessment** of 70 members from the KNH unit, utilizing a combination of text-based and participatory methods. The areas that were focused on were Conflict Dynamics, Conflict Transformation and Peace Building, Do No Harm approach, Gender Sensitization, Emotional Intelligence and Leadership skills development. The objective of this capacity building training workshop was to transfer knowledge on Conflict Transformation and Peace Building to 70 KNH members. The two months under reporting were spent in conducting the SFCG Capacity Assessment with 70 KNH members of the KNH unit which came under this study. The Capacity Assessment was followed by producing a training module in which all the areas for a training was planned and detailed. Spinning

off this project SFCG contracted CEPA once again to conduct a three-day Capacity Building Training in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding for the 09 KNH unit members of the CSO. The training was conducted over three days 23rd, 24th and 25th of February 2023 at the Hotel Manderina Colombo. 25 KNH unit staff member attached to 09 CSOs participated in a residential workshop. The Workshop was also attended by the KNG Country Coordinator, and several staff members from both KNH and SFCG.

External Workshops

Throughout the past year, CEPA's training staff actively participated in a diverse range of external workshops, training sessions, and facilitation opportunities, further enhancing their expertise and expanding their professional networks.

One notable event was a roundtable discussion facilitated by the ROLC, which explored broader strategies for think tanks to improve their impact in the current Sri Lankan context, Strategic Inspiration PVT LTD with University of South Carolina.

Additionally, CEPA's staff attended a training workshop on "Leading with Emotional Intelligence," organized by Lanka Talents and facilitated by Ms.Rasini Bandara. This workshop, held at the Movenpick Hotel in Colombo on February 10th, 2023.

Indika Bulankulame was invited to facilitate a training workshop on "Women Peace Builders," organized by the Centre for Equality & Justice. This event, which took place on February 28th, 2023 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI).

Development of Training Programmes

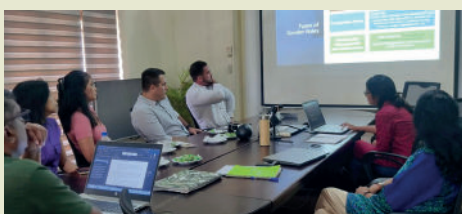
CEPA embarked on a series of initiatives to enhance the skills and knowledge of its staff through various training programmes.

A notable endeavour involved the development of a Cost-Benefit

Analysis for Sustainable Development Training Workshop in collaboration with Prof. Kotagama, Basic Services Team leader, and Dr. Herath Gunathilake, Executive Director. The training focused on government officials working in relevant areas..

CEPA hosted a visit from Mount Royal University, Canada, led by Prof. Tom Buchanan, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, and Dr. Samanti Kulatilake, Associate Professor and Biological Anthropologist, Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

A team of 12 undergraduate students in Sociology and Anthropology were brought for an exposure visit and training. CEPA members, including Dr. Gayathri Lokuge, Nadhiya Azmy, Thamindri Aluvihare, and Shaneendra Amarasinghe, presented on Participatory Research: Memories from the Margin. Prof. Tom Buchanan also presented on "Decomposing Inequality: Gender Differences in Parenting Time in Canada.



International
Training workshop for
James Cook University
Australia

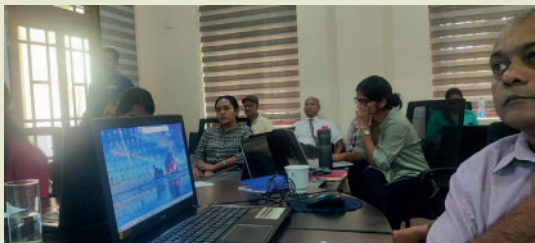


International Training workshop for Mt. Royal University Calgary, Canada

CEPA also hosted a visit from James Cook University, Townsville, Australia, led by CEPA member Professor Anusha Coorey, Professor of Finance and Head of Academic Group, Accounting and Finance, at the College of Business, Law and Governance. The visit was a

full-day session, where CEPA members, including Minuri Perera, Nadiya Azmy, Thilini de Alwis, Nadhiya Nijab, Dilshani Ranawaka, and Prof. Herath Gunathilake, presented on topics such as COVID-19 impacts on micro and small enterprises, climate change and conflict, gender in research, budgetary analysis, and the economic crisis in Sri Lanka.

CEPA conducted a training programmes focused on statistical analysis and data management for social science research. These workshops aimed to equip staff members with essential skills in quantitative research methods, with a specific focus on poverty-related research. Led by esteemed resource persons such as Prof. Mahinda Dematawewa, Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture at the University of Peradeniya, and Dr. Senal Weerasooriya, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, these training sessions provided participants with a solid foundation in statistical methods and their practical applications in social science research. The hands-on training and interactive sessions enabled staff members to gain valuable insights and enhance their research capabilities. The workshop was conducted on 12 & 13 of October 2023.



*External Resource
Persons Conducting
a training programme
focused on statistical
analysis and data
management for social
science research*



A Training on TEAMS application was held for CEPA staff members on the 23 of August 2023. 17 staff members participated. The training was conducted by Shiyam Kamal of Inbay SL through The International Institute of Knowledge Management. To strengthen data collection, management, and visualization capabilities, CEPA organized a Kobo training session led by research professionals within the organization. Kobo Toolbox, a widely used platform for research and social science research, offers robust data systems and technology for various sectors, including humanitarian action, development, and peacebuilding. The training session aimed to familiarize staff members with the platform's features and functionalities, empowering them to leverage Kobo Toolbox for efficient data collection and analysis in their research projects.

A research on 'Voices of Poverty, Visions of Youth: An Exploratory Study" was undertaken and the video developed under tis was presented in the poverty symposium. This rapid, exploratory study, conducted by Indika Bulankulame, aimed to comprehensively explore the aspirations of Sri Lankan youth with an aim to understand the essence of being a Sri Lankan youth, their perspectives on education, responses to economic challenges, employment prospects, and overarching aspirations. By unraveling these dimensions, the study intended to inform policies and programs that resonate with the needs and dreams of the youth population.



*Search For Common
Grounds (SFCG) /
Kinder not hilfe (KNH)
Training Workshop*

2.3.1 Poverty Symposium

Sri Lanka showed a remarkable progress in poverty reduction since 1990s; poverty incidence was 26.1% in 1990 and it came down to about 4% by 2016. Impact of the COVID – 19 pandemic and economic led to an economic contraction and substantial increase in poverty. The World Bank claimed that the poverty incidence increased to about 26% by 2022. Thus, all the gains in reducing poverty over decades were eroded in couple of years pushing many families back into poverty. The reasons behind this dramatic change can be many and complex. Understanding the policies and processes through which poverty has reduced and what caused the reversal of the gains is the necessary first step in formulating a proper strategy to tackle poverty in the future. In this context, the Center for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) has organized a symposium to gather the views of experts, practitioners and other stakeholders to update the understanding of poverty in Sri Lanka and discuss feasible strategies to reduce poverty under current rapidly changing circumstances.

The symposium reviewed poverty issues through time (Retrospect) in order broaden the understanding, and focus on measuring and dealing with poverty in the present crisis situation and beyond (Prospect). Understanding the success of previous efforts of poverty reduction with a focus on the applicability of similar approaches in the future, would be one of the outcomes of the symposium.

Symposium recognized that dealing with poverty in a crisis situation is much more challenging. Continuous update on the macro-economic challenges and fall out of these in terms of poverty and inequality has become imperative. The complementarity between IMF stabilization program and structural reforms that are needed to put the economy back to a sustainable path of growth is obvious. However, the current emphasis seems to be mainly on stabilization. Stabilization alone will

not be sufficient as economic growth may play a significant role in creating an enabling environment for poverty reduction. Economic reforms, beyond economic stabilization policies, may disproportionately affect the poor too. Therefore, supplementary policies to minimize the adverse impact of reform on the poor are necessary. Yet, the understanding as well as emphasis on such policies seem to be limited. The symposium discussions therefore would connect the macro issues with more micro/lived experiences of poverty – drawing from the past, present, and global lessons.

The Symposium attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What macroeconomic, and sectoral policies and targeted support moved people out of poverty in Sri Lanka in the past? Can the same be continued or adapted to the current situation where many avenues that help reduce poverty such as public sector jobs, subsidies, protectionism may not be feasible?
2. How do we learn/adapt from the past, what do we need to do differently, and what we must not compromise to remain relevant, responsive, effective and fair in our efforts to reduce poverty?
3. What have we learned from the decades of work on poverty measurements? How can poverty measurement be tailor-made to suite a crisis situation?
4. How relevant is the need to think beyond income poverty when poverty is widespread? What needs to be done to prevent vulnerable groups such as women bearing the brunt of the crisis and being pushed back to poverty due to external

socio-economic, environmental or political reasons?

5. How significant will be the role of economic growth in poverty reduction in the post crisis period? How do we ensure that economic growth is inclusive and does not lead to greater marginalization?
6. What is the relevance and importance of governance for poverty reduction during crisis and post crisis period? How do we ensure that necessary reforms, democratic processes and accountability measures are in place?
7. What lessons can Sri Lanka learn from the experience of other countries who have gone through similar crises?

The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) successfully concluded a landmark symposium, "Poverty Alleviation in an Era of Economic Crisis," on November 29th and 30th at BMICH, Colombo. The symposium, which brought together distinguished experts, practitioners, and stakeholders, emerged as a pivotal platform for sharing knowledge, fostering insights and discussions on combatting poverty amidst Sri Lanka's economic challenges. About 170 participated in person in both days.

The event witnessed a convergence of Experts and thought leaders, delving into critical themes that significantly impact poverty reduction strategies. Renowned keynote speakers, Dr. Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Former Central Bank Governor, and Dr. Rana Hasan, Regional Lead Economist of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), delivered their opinions on how the country's economy should be steered to reach economic stability and growth during the next few years to enable poverty reduction.

Dr. Indrajith Coomaraswamy highlighted the country's struggle to sustain poverty alleviation efforts amid cyclical economic instability. Coomaraswamy emphasized Sri Lanka's underperformance in repeated IMF programs, fiscal dominance over monetary policies, and unsustainable budgetary operations. The graduation to a middle-income status adversely affected the country, leading to a loss of donor support and concessions. Recent stabilization efforts and legislative changes aim to strengthen fiscal rules and manage liabilities strategically, while recommendations span from continuation of stabilization efforts and introducing necessary structural reforms. He cautioned against the danger of deviation from the reform agenda in an election year pointing out that the society has no any buffers left to absorb major economic shocks.

Dr. Rana Hasan reiterated the importance of getting back to positive economic growth and explain in details the necessary productivity improvements Sri Lank should pursue to ensure economic growth The event also saw the screening of the documentary “Voices of Poverty, Visions of Youth: An Exploratory Study” highlighting aspirations of the youth, empowerment, education and migration, followed by a panel discussion.

The initial plenary session on the Retrospect of Poverty, led by a panel exploring Sri Lanka's poverty drivers and associated implications, delved into insights shared on successful policies and strategies that reduced poverty significantly. The necessity for reforms to stimulate economic growth was highlighted, emphasizing the importance of market liberalization and global integration Crucial aspects like land ownership, technological advancements, and fair access to market opportunities emerged as key in addressing poverty. Robust data collection methods were emphasized to bridge macro-micro gaps for more effective poverty reduction strategies. The session concluded by

stressing the need for holistic approaches, governance reforms, and comprehensive implementation strategies to achieve sustainable poverty alleviation.

The discussion on establishing a comprehensive social protection system underscored the critical need social protection, Targeted approaches addressing social assistance, care services, and labor markets were emphasized to combat crisis-related challenges. The session stressed the importance of community-based responses, recognizing communities as vital in real-time crisis management. It highlighted the necessity for a coherent policy roadmap, government commitment, and inclusive targeting methods, acknowledging communities' roles in transparent processes. Overall, it emphasized universal social protection's importance, practical implementation strategies, and integrating community-based solutions into an adaptable framework.

Another session explored crises through a feminist lens, spotlighting increased responsibilities faced by working women, especially during crises, addressing issues of poverty, marginalization, and resilience. It noted the exclusion of women from policymaking processes, resulting in job losses and increased vulnerability, particularly in labor reforms and economic decisions. Discussions highlighted challenges faced by migrant women, their limited support access, and ensuing debt traps. The session also addressed women's political participation, representation in decision-making spaces, and the need for inclusive policies and gender-aware reforms to foster empowerment and meaningful engagement.

In the agricultural transformation discussion, crucial themes emerged, highlighting policy reforms to address food crop sector challenges, focusing on liberalizing land markets, farm size and productivity, and

the need to limit the government interventions to rectify market failures. Donors stressed transitioning from emergency to development-oriented approaches, advocating productivity, modernization, and gender inclusion while prioritizing sustainable reforms. Climate-smart agriculture was emphasized for addressing climate change impacts, necessitating strategic and structural changes. Persistent poverty in the plantation require innovative approaches including land rights of workers, technological modernization, product diversification and resource-efficient practices.

The session on MSMEs for economic recovery highlighted inequality within these enterprises, focusing on challenges like limited access to technology and credit. The rising adoption of digital technologies was recognized as a significant trend.

Discussions delved into export trade barriers, including competition among regional counterparts, quantity issues, and quality certification gaps. A gender perspective on the National SME Policy revealed disparities in considerations for women entrepreneurs and outdated data's impact on policy decisions. Recommendations focused on technological exposure, mentorship, value addition, policy revisions, updated databases, and societal mindset shifts. Additionally, suggestions emphasized absorbing market trends, facilitating resource access, and learning from global developments for MSMEs' growth.

The session on inequality walked the audience through the evolution of the economic theory and empirical findings on the relationship amongst economic growth and poverty and inequality. It pointed out economic growth is necessary but not sufficient for reducing the mass-scaled poverty in the country. The session identified five major risks that may prevent Sri Lanka from getting to a higher path of economic growth: i) deviating from the reform agenda in the election

year; ii) lack of public support for reforms due to none- transparent and none consultative approach of the government; iii) lack of or partial implementation of reforms; iv) corruption vulnerabilities; and iv) increasing inequality. The session emphasized the importance of implementing supplementary policies to reduce inequality while pursuing economic growth as a means to reduce poverty

Over two engaging days, the symposium navigated through multifaceted discussions addressing macroeconomic implications, social protection mechanisms, feminist approaches in crises, agricultural transformations, and the resilience of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Thought-provoking plenary sessions dissected the intertwining factors of economic crises, poverty, vulnerability, and the critical role of inequality in poverty reduction.

The recommendations and insights generated from this symposium hold immense potential in guiding policies and frameworks towards a poverty-free Sri Lanka. This symposium was convened by Dr. Indika Bulankulame

Media Coverage:

A total of 11 articles and 02 Electronic media clippings were published about the CEPA symposium Table 4 and Tables 5 provide the details of print media and online articles about the poverty symposium

Table 4: Online Articles about the Symposium 2023

Language	Print	Online
English	4	3
Sinhala	5	1
Tamil	2	5

Table 5: Print Media

Publication	Count	Date Print	Language	Name of the Article	Page #
The Morning	01	28-Nov-23	English	CEPA explores poverty alleviation during econ. Crisis	02
Daily Aruna	02	29-Nov-23	Sinhala	දිළිඳුකම පිටුදැකීමේ සම්මන්ත්‍රණය අද සහ හෙට කොළඹදී	02
Daily Mawbima	03	29-Nov-23	Sinhala	‘දරිද්‍රතා විශ්ලේෂණ සම්මන්ත්‍රණය අද සහ හෙට’	11
Daily Lankadeepa	04	30-Nov-23	Sinhala	‘ආර්ථික අර්බුදය: සමුද්‍රවේදී...’	12
Daily Mawbima	05	30-Nov-23	Sinhala	‘ලෝකය සමග තරග කරන විවෘත ආර්ථික ප්‍රතිපත්ති අවශ්‍යයි’	09
Daily Thamilan	06	30-Nov-23	Tamil	‘Warumey Olippu Ayu Karuththarantal’	07
Dinamina	07	01-Dec-23	Sinhala	‘ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ දිළිඳුකම 4.5% දක්වා පහත දැමීම ප්‍රගතිශීලී ජයග්‍රහණයක්’	06
Daily Island	08	04-Dec-23	English	SL economy on right track: Ex – CBSL Chief ‘Politicians and public must behave better’	01
Tamil Mirror	09	04-Dec-23	Tamil	‘Warumey Olippikkana Upaya Mulahiha! Pattriya Karuththarantal’	05
Daily FT	10	19-Dec-23	English	Addressing poverty in Sri Lanka: Insights from CEPA symposium on economic crises and sustainable solutions	10
Daily Ceylon Today	11	20-Dec-23	English	CEPA Symposium tackles poverty with sustainable solutions	07

Table 6: Online Articles about the Symposium 2023

	Channel Name	Date Published	Language	Name of the Article
1	Topic.lk	29-Nov-23	Sinhala	දරිද්‍රතා විශ්ලේෂණ කේන්ද්‍රය සම්මන්ත්‍රණය මගින් ආර්ථික අර්බුදය හමුවේ දිළිඳුකම පිටුදැකීමේ උපාය මාර්ග පිළිබඳ හොඳා බලයි..
2	Ada Derana	30-Nov-23	Tamil	வறுமை ஆராய்ச்சி நிலையத்தின் ஆய்வுக் கருத்தரங்கானது பொருளாதார நெருக்கடியினை எதிர்கொள்ளும் சந்தர்பத்தினில் வறுமை ஒழிப்பிற்கான உபாயமுறைகளைப் பற்றி ஆராய்கின்றது (Research Seminar of the Center for Poverty Research examines strategies for poverty alleviation in the context of economic crisis.)
3	Eye View	30-Nov-23	Tamil	வறுமை ஆராய்ச்சி நிலையத்தின் ஆய்வுக் கருத்தரங்கானது பொருளாதார நெருக்கடியினை எதிர்கொள்ளும் சந்தர்பத்தினில் வறுமை ஒழிப்பிற்கான உபாயமுறைகளைப் பற்றி ஆராய்கின்றது (Research Seminar of the Center for Poverty Research examines strategies for poverty alleviation in the context of economic crisis.)
4	Thinakaran	30-Nov-23	Tamil	பொருளாதார நெருக்கடியை எதிர்கொள்ளும் வேளையில் வறுமை ஒழிப்பிற்கான உபாயங்களை ஆராயும் வறுமை ஆராய்ச்சி நிலைய ஆய்வுக் கருத்தரங்கு (A Poverty Research Center research seminar exploring strategies for poverty alleviation in the face of economic crisis)
5	BizMedia a	04-Dec-23	Tamil	வறுமை ஆராய்ச்சி நிலையத்தின் ஆய்வுக் கருத்தரங்கானது பொருளாதார நெருக்கடியினை எதிர்கொள்ளும் சந்தர்பத்தினில் வறுமை ஒழிப்பிற்கான உபாயமுறைகளைப் பற்றி ஆராய்கின்றது (Research Seminar of the Center for Poverty Research examines strategies for poverty alleviation in the context of economic crisis.)
6	Tamil Mirror	04-Dec-23	Tamil	வறுமை ஒழிப்பிற்கான உபாயமுறைகள் பற்றிய கருத்தரங்கு (Seminar on Strategies for Poverty Alleviation)
7	The Island	04-Dec-23	English	SL economy on right track: Ex-CBSL Chief 'Politicians and public must behave better'
8	Daily FT	19-Dec-23	English	Addressing poverty in Sri Lanka: Insights from CEPA symposium on economic crises and sustainable solutions
9	Ceylon Today	20-Dec-23	English	CEPA Symposium tackles poverty with sustainable solutions

Table 7: Television Channels about the Symposium - 2023

	Channel Name	Date of Published	Language	Time	Time of news item aired	Name of the News
1	Ada Derana TV	29-Nov-23	Sinhala	6:55P M	13:31	ආයුර්වේද උපකරණයක් සහ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ආර්ථික ඉදිරියාව
2	Hiru TV	29-Nov-23	Sinhala	9:55 PM	28:20	මෙරට සර්ව ආර්ථික තත්ත්වයට හේතුව එයයේ අවධානය මෙහෙයුම් බව සියලු

2.4 COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

CEPA's efforts to recruit two communication specialists, one senior and one mid-career professional, was not successful. As an alternative, CEPA management decided to outsource communication function. CEPA's advertisement attracted 8 communication companies and 4 were shortlisted. Adfactors PR Lanka Pvt Ltd was given a three-month contract and after reviewing their initial performance another 4-month contract was awarded. This arrangement was successful as their services were very good during the Poverty Symposium. There were few weak areas and Adfactors management agreed to rectify them. If the performance of the second contract is satisfactory, this company will be awarded a one-year contract. This outsourcing arrangement allows CEPA to get the access of number of different type of communication specialist at a lower cost.

CEPA has made efforts to increase its social media presence to reach a wider audience, especially youth through its Website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

The Team also designed flyers, and prepared tweets that were shared on significant days and events. The Communications team also supported the Research and Reflection Series.

The cumulative reach for FB in the year under review has grown.

CEPA's FB page follower count grew from 3,737 to 4,576. In the period under review, CEPA was mentioned by FB pages of ACTED, Southern Voice, IWRAW, and the project SCOPE. CEPA's Instagram account now has 502 followers. CEPA's YouTube account has had 7 uploads in the given period.

CEPA's twitter account has 2704 followers. The Adfactor PR continued to support CEPA staff and research by creating/ sharing event posters and live tweeting significant events. The CEPA website was also updated throughout the year, with event flyers, blogs and newsletters. Overall CEPA's Instagram account reaches around 260 accounts per month and has 482 followers.

The communication and outreach efforts surrounding CEPA's Poverty Symposium, held on November 29th, 2023. The symposium, titled "Poverty in an Era of Economic Crisis," garnered significant attention through a comprehensive pre-event publicity campaign. Print articles were published in the Daily Mirror and Dinamina, while online articles were featured on various news platforms, including Ada Derana, BizMediaa, Daily Mirror, Eye View, Lanka Business News, and Profit Online (Table 6).

The digital outreach strategy further amplified the symposium's reach and engagement. On Facebook, CEPA's posts achieved a reach of 16.5k, with 394 engagements and 35 link clicks. On Instagram, CEPA's consistent and interactive posting campaigns resulted in a 42.2% increase in accounts reached and a 228% increase in accounts engaged, with 113 new followers. Complementing the digital efforts, CEPA also produced an informative video that encapsulated the organization's multifaceted approach to poverty reduction. Directed by Mr. Sanka Malwatte and with videography by Ms. Waruni Chandrasena, the 5-minute video was screened at the Poverty

Symposium, inspiring engagement, support, and participation in CEPA's mission to build a more equitable world.

2.4.1 CEPA Publications

CEPA published a review report: A Retrospect on Poverty and Inequality

Journal Articles

‘It Is Our Motherland Too: Transnational Engagement, Religious Identity and Mobilisation of Muslims of Sri Lankan Origin in the UK’ - An article by Mohamed Munas , published by Diasporas Studies Journal: Diaspora Studies Volume 16 Issue 2 (2023) (brill.com)
Imagining, Conceiving and Implementing Development: Diaspora Philanthropic Interventions in Post-War Sri Lanka- Article by Mohamed Munas and Lothar Smith, published in peer-reviewed, Journal of South Asian Development

Newspaper Social Media Articles

Coping with the economic crisis - fishing livelihoods and food security
| Sunday Observer

<https://www.sundayobserver.lk/2022/09/11/impact/coping-economic-crisis-fishing-livelihoods-and-food-security-0>

<https://www.sundayobserver.lk/2022/11/20/impact/fertiliser-ban-went-awry>

Insights from Sri Lanka’s workshop on implementing SDGs while reducing inequality - Featured on the SEI website

<https://www.sei.org/features/sdgs-while-reducing-inequality-in-sri-lanka/>

CEPA Research, Reflection and Practices 5 - YouTube

<https://youtu.be/pualFWuVojI>

How Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Sri Lanka Upgraded their Services during COVID-19 By Heli De Alwis and Gayathri Lokuge - Featured in Southern Voice website

Elder Care in Sri Lanka: Are we Prepared for the Future? By Thahira Cader for the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) – Featured on The Morning on 01 July 2023,

<https://www.themorning.lk/articles/Y0oCbz4K9xcXKxqev1CH>

CEPA Blogs Articles

“A Thinking About Resilience Beyond Coping”

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/creating-a-new-poor-the-fertiliser-ban-that-marked-the-beginning-of-the-e>

CEPA | Warning Signs: Recognising who is at risk, how they are coping and taking action

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/there-is-no-change-or-hope-for-us-gendered-impacts-of-crises-on-coastal-communities/>

Income Distribution Trends: World Vs. Sri Lanka

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/income-distribution-trends-world-vs-sri-lanka/>

The Egg Industry: Another Victim of Ad Hoc and Reactionary Policies?

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/the-egg-industry-another-victim-of-ad-hoc-and-reactionary-policies/>

Influence of Political-Economic Policies on Income Inequalities in Sri Lanka

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/influence-of-political-economic-policies-on-income-inequalities-in-sri-lanka/>

Sri Lanka's Status in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals on Reduced Inequalities and Shared Prosperity

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/sri-lankas-status-in-achieving-sustainable-development-goals-on-reduced-inequalities-and-shared-prosperity/>

Provincial Inequalities in Income and its Distribution in Sri Lanka

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/provincial-inequalities-in-income-and-its-distribution-in-sri-lanka/>

Trade Union Actions, Wages and Inflation: Rights versus Responsibilities

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/trade-union-actions-wages-and-inflation-rights-versus-responsibilities/>

Does Policy Coherence Matter? By Pamodi Hewawaravita and Karin Fernando

<https://www.cepta.lk/news/does-policy-coherence-matter/>

How Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Sri Lanka Upgraded their Services during COVID-19 By Heli De Alwis and Gayathri Lokuge

<https://www.cepta.lk/blog/how-micro-small-and-medium-enterprises-in-sri-lanka-upgraded-their-services-during-covid-19/>

Elder Care in Sri Lanka: Are we Prepared for the Future? By Thahira Cader for the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/elder-care-in-sri-lanka-are-we-prepared-for-the-future/>

නව “අස්වැසුම” - දුගී සුරක්ෂිතතා
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Paradox of Persistence of Poverty in Paddy Farming Whilst Achieving National Self-sufficiency By Hemesiri Kotagama

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/paradox-of-persistence-of-poverty-in-paddy-farming-whilst-achieving-national-self-sufficiency/>

Education Inequality in Sri Lanka, Nov 2023 By Prof.

Vengadeshraavan Sarma

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/education-inequality-in-sri-lanka/>

Income and Wealth Inequality in Sri Lanka Nov 2023

Prof. Ravindra Deyshappriya

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/income-and-wealth-inequality-in-sri-lanka/>

Progress of Aswesuma and the Aswesuma Week Nov 2023 By Prof.

Hemesiri Kotagama

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/progress-of-aswesuma-and-the-aswesuma-week/>

A Governance Diagnostic by the Sri Lankan Public Nov 2023

Prof. Hemesiri Kotagama

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/a-governance-diagnostic-by-the-sri-lankan-public/>

An Empirical Assessment on Appropriateness of Alternative Poverty Measurements Based on Inclusion and Exclusion Error Estimate
October 2023 By Prof. Hemesiri Kotagama

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/an-empirical-assessment-on-appropriateness-of-alternative-poverty-measurements-based-on-inclusion-and-exclusion-error-estimate/>

Social Protection in Sri Lanka October 2023. The Centre for Poverty Analysis

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/social-protection-in-sri-lanka/>

Quantification of Household Income Vulnerability due to the Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka October 2023 Varagana Ratwatte et al

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/quantification-of-household-income-vulnerability-due-to-the-economic-crisis-in-sri-lanka/>

Points to Ponder Prior to Privatising State Owned Enterprises in Sri Lanka October 2023 By Prof. Hemesiri Kotagama

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/points-to-ponder-prior-to-privatizing-state-owned-enterprises-in-sri-lanka/>

Strengthening the Social Safety Net is Critical: IMF Pronounces on First Review of Sri Lanka's Extended Fund Facility Arrangement
October 2023 By Prof. Hemesiri Kotagama

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/strengthening-the-social-safety-net-is-critical/>

Crisis-Driven Migration or Something More? Decent Work Deficits and the Migration of Health Workers from Sri Lanka October 2023 By Chandima Arambepola

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/crisis-driven-migration-or-something-more-decent-work-deficits-and-the-migration-of-health-workers-from-sri-lanka/>

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/%e0%b7%80%e0%b7%90%e0%b6%a9-%e0%b7%80%e0%b6%bb%e0%b7%8a%e0%b6%a2%e0%b6%b1-%e0%b7%80%e0%b7%90%e0%b6%a7%e0%b7%94%e0%b6%b4%e0%b7%8a-%e0%b7%83%e0%b7%84-%e0%b6%8b%e0%b6%af%e0%b7%8a%e0%b6%b0%e0%b6%b8/>

Navigating the Nexus: Social Cohesion and Poverty in Sri Lanka : Part
02 Sept 2023 By Louis Samarasinghe

<https://www.cepa.lk/blog/navigating-the-nexus-social-cohesion-and-poverty-in-sri-lanka-part-2/>

CEPA Newsletters

CEPA in Sight : January 2023 Volume 13

<https://www.cepa.lk/newsletter13/>

This volume of CEPA's newsletter focused on our work on poverty inequality in Sri Lanka.

CEPA in Sight : May 2023 Volume 14

<https://www.cepa.lk/newsletter14/>

This volume of CEPA's newsletter focused on our work in the realm of social cohesion with a specific focus on CEPA'S Intergenerational Dialogue Series.

CEPA in Sight : October 2023 Volume 15

<https://www.cepa.lk/cepa-in-sight-vol-15/>

This volume of CEPA's newsletter focused on our work related to climate change, conflict and sustainability.



ED's participation in consultation on ADB partnership strategy for Sri Lanka

2.4.2 Events & Presentations by Staff

- The fifth installation of the Intergenerational Dialogue Series (IDS) took place at CEPA 3.00pm on the 23rd of February, 2023 as a hybrid event. The Topic was Economic Justice.
- Karin participated as a panelist at a LirneAsia event on social safety nets on June 7th, 2023. Her insights and perspectives shared during the event contributed to the discussions on this critical issue.
- Nadiya presented SSRC research at a roundtable event in Sri Lanka on June 13th, 2023. This presentation provided an opportunity to share important findings and engage with stakeholders on relevant topics.
- Minuri attended a virtual workshop on "Poverty, hunger and jobs: pandemic update and recovery prospects" from June 27th to 29th, 2023. Her participation allowed for valuable contributions to discussions on these pressing development challenges.
- Nadhiya took part in a training workshop on the Grounded Accountability Model (GAM) on July 11th, 2023. This workshop, organized by Search for Common Ground, equipped her with skills to apply the GAM tool in our work.
- Gayathri and Shaneendra met with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Transport on July 02 and July 07, 2023, respectively, to present findings from the WFD study. These meetings aimed to inform policy decisions in the health and transport sectors.

- Karin provided insights from Sri Lanka for a training session/side event on the SEI Interactions model at the High-Level Political Forum in New York on July 12th, 2023. Her contributions enriched the discussions at this global event.
- Gayathri attended a meeting at the British High Commission on July 13th, 2023, with representatives from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to advocate for equitable service provision in the health and transport sectors.
- Shaneendra and Minuri participated in the IGNI+E Programme Advisory Committee Meeting on August 25, 2023, organized by the World University Service of Canada. Their involvement contributed to the ongoing development of the program.
- Nadiya attended a Round Table Discussion on the Issue Paper on Women and Development on August 18, 2023, organized by The Sri Lanka Innovators' Forum of the Gamani Corea Foundation. This event facilitated discussions on women's empowerment and development.
- Nadiya attended the Climate Action South Asia (CANSA) retreat on August 21, 2023. This retreat provided a platform to engage with experts and stakeholders on climate action initiatives in the region.
- Karin was a panelist at a high-level event on progress towards the SDGs organized by SDC in Colombo on August 29, 2023. Her participation contributed to discussions on advancing sustainable development goals.

- Minuri attended the International Youth Climate Conference organized by the British Council from August 29 to 30, 2023. This conference provided a platform for youth leaders to collaborate on climate change initiatives.
- Nadhiya attended a 5-day residential workshop on CEDAW and Macroeconomics from August 28 to September 1, 2023. This workshop will contribute to the upcoming CEDAW shadow report due for review in September 2024.
- The CEPA team held a staff retreat on 29th and 30th October 2023 in Kandy with the objective of identifying short to medium-term research priorities through intense engagement from the organization's thematic areas. The outcome of the retreat was to present a CEPA strategy, which will be further refined after discussions with the Board of Directors and subscribing members.

3. FINANCIAL REVIEW

2023 was a year of re-adjusting to the challenges posed by the pandemic that evolved throughout the world since 2019. CEPA adopted many changes to its operating strategy to minimize the net deficit resulting from the operational activities.

Table 8: Financial Statement of CEPA

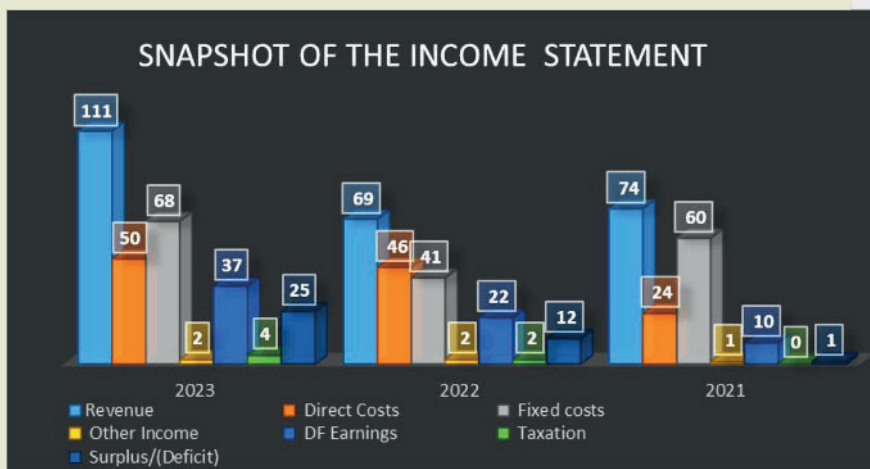
Amalgamated Income Statement Rs. Million	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	111	69	74
Direct Costs (project related expenses)	(50)	(46)	(24)
Gross Profit	61	23	50
Fixed costs (salaries, benefits and admin costs)	(68)	(41)	(60)
Operational Deficit	(7)	(18)	(10)
Other Income	2	2	1
DF Earnings	37	22	10
Forex Exchange Gain/Loss	(3)	8	0
Taxation	(4)	(2)	0
Surplus/(Deficit)	25	12	1

Revenue increased by about 60% in comparison to 2022 (Table 7). This increase is due to the increase in the number of contractual projects in 2023. Direct costs were also increased by about 9%. This increase is due to the increase in number of projects. However, direct costs of the project vary from project to project and it depends on the type of projects in the portfolio. The fixed costs increased by 66% in comparison to 2022 and this is mainly due to two salary increases implemented in 2023. Increase in inflation also contributed to this increase. Year 2023 recorded an operational loss of about Rs.7 million. However, this loss is due to the provision of gratuity payments of Rs.7 million to follow accounting standards (Table 8). Given that this Rs.7 million is not a real cost, the operations of CEPA recorded a small surplus of Rs 494,746. Overall, CEPA recorded Rs.25 million surplus in 2023 according to accounting standards. The actual surplus is over Rs.30 million because, the provision for gratuity payment is not a real cost. Table 2 provides the operational surplus details of the surplus as presented to the Board in January 2024.

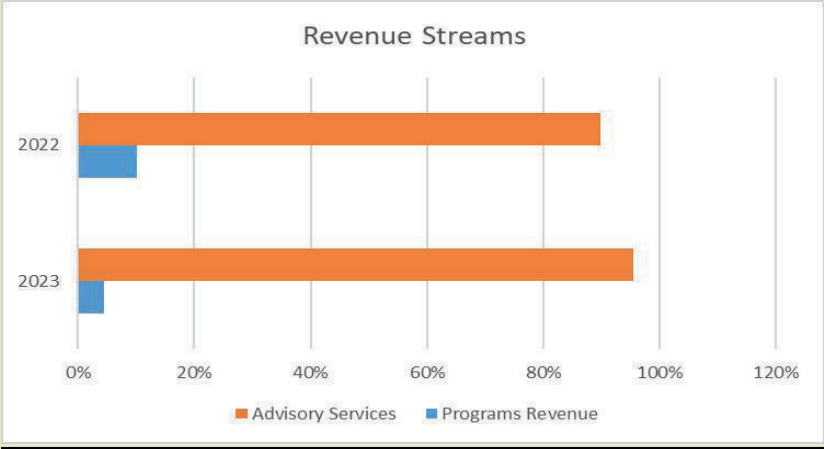
Table 9: Reconciliation of Audited Accounts and Management Accounts

Item	Audited Accounts Rs.	Management Accounts, Rs.
<u>Revenue</u>	111,217,280	111,217,280
<u>Direct Costs</u>	(50,380,552)	(50,380,552)
Gross Surplus	60,836,728	60,836,728
Transferred from Restricted Funds	906,448	336,624

Staff Expenses	(43,543,475)	(43,543,475)
Gratuity Provision	(7,063,671)	
Administrative Expenditure	(15,305,438)	(15,305,437)
Publication & Seminars	(726,987)	(726,987)
Net finance income/ (cost)	(766,082)	(766,082)
Utilization of restricted Funds	(906,448)	(336,624)
Net Surplus/(Deficit) from Operations	(6,568,925)	494,746

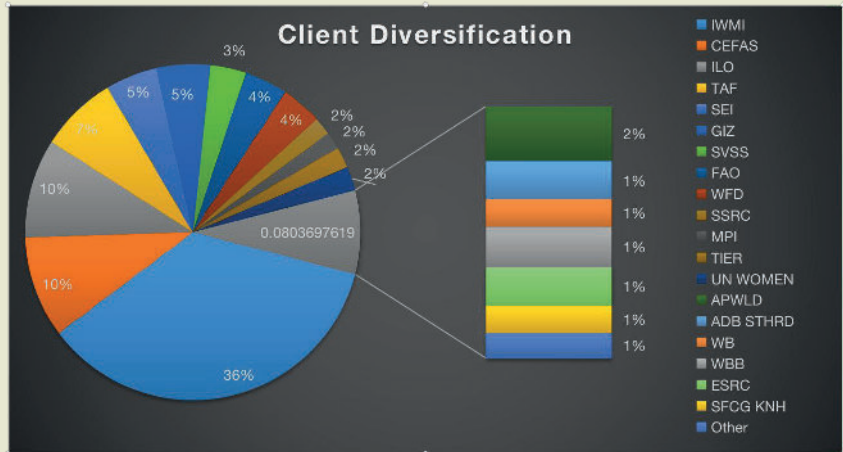


Revenue Composition



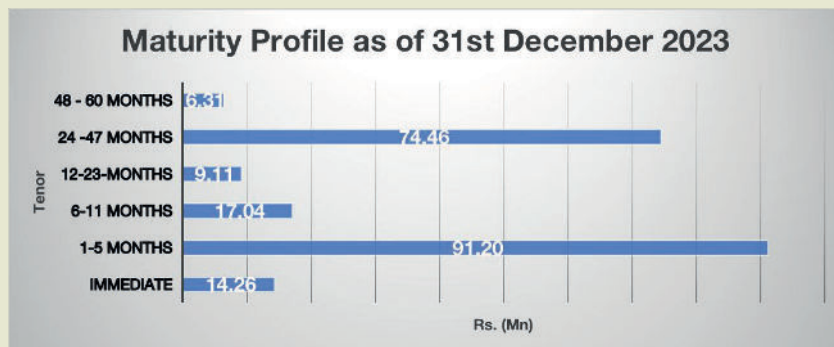
The total revenue of CEPA has been, 95% from fee based services and 5% from programs and thematic funds and in previous year fee based had been 90% and program/thematic funds 10%

Client Diversification



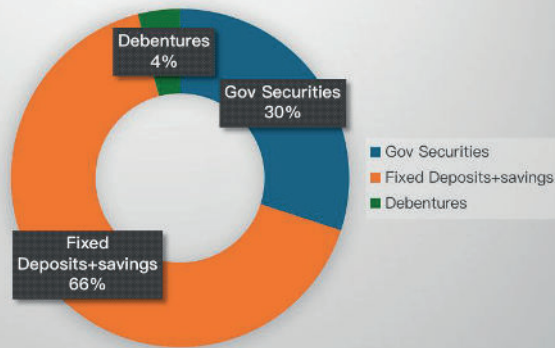
CEPA’s client portfolio has further diversified during the year 2023, with new clients such as IWM, CEPAS, Barometer new partnerships with FAO and assignments with universities such as Bath and Nottingham added to the existing client portfolio.

Development Fund



The Development Fund is regulated through a Trust and is managed by a Board of Trustees. The purpose of the fund is to provide support to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization as well as to maintain professional independence. With fiscal policy changes introduced by Government, the interest rates were increased in 2023 and accordingly the Fund is earning a higher interest currently. The Development Fund earned an income of Rs. 37 Mn in 2023 against Rs 22 Mn in 2022. Fund balance as at year end was Rs.191 Mn as per the audited accounts. The board approved Rs 20 Mn payable to CEPA also shown under the maturity profile of above as at 31st of Dec 2023 which has not been withdrawn from the Development Fund. Due to a conservative investment policy, CEPA maintains its investments in diversified sources in a low-risk portfolio. The tenor of the investments has been strategized by the trustees, considering the operational needs of CEPA and the fundamental objectives of the development fund trust.

Composition of Investments



The fund composition as at year-end was 30% in Government securities, and 66% in Fixed Deposits/Savings, and 4% Debentures in high profile Bank and related borrowers. The Fund Management Company, CT CLSA asset management (pvt) Ltd presents their compliance, in terms of agreement with CEPA Development Fund on a quarterly basis, and a Monthly Earnings report for the perusal of the Development Fund Trustees. This follows a reporting requirement set by the Trust in order to improve the performance of the portfolio through continuous monitoring.

3.1 REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee oversees the Company's financial reporting process on behalf of the Board of Directors. The Company's management has the primary responsibility for the financial statements, for maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting, and for assessing the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting. In fulfilling its oversight responsibilities, the Committee reviewed and discussed the audited financial statements in the Annual Report with Company management, including a discussion of the quality, acceptability, accounting principles; reasonableness of significant judgments; and the clarity of disclosures in the financial statements.

The Audit Committee of CEPA was formally constituted in 2012 as a sub-committee of the Main Board, to which it is accountable. The composition of the committee was changed during the year due to many changes that took place within the Board of Directors. The Committee was chaired by Mr. Roshan Ranasinghe, Deshamanya Deva Rodrigo (until March), Mr. Irshad Halaldeen (from May), Prof. Sasanka Perera (from May until October) and Mr. Manilka Fernando (from October) are the other members of the Audit Committee.

The Committee is governed by a charter and the principal duties are as follows:

Compliance with Financial Reporting

The Audit Committee reviews the quarterly and annual financial statements for its integrity and the annual report for consistency of statements made therein so far, as they relate to financial performance and the financial position of the Company. The review included

compliance with relevant Accounting Standards and applicable regulatory requirements.

Risk Management

The Audit Committee meets the Head of Finance and Executive Director and other members of the Risk Committee established in 2015, on a quarterly basis and discusses with them the steps they have taken to have in force an effective system of internal control, and to identify, monitor and manage the operational risks of the Company.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

The Audit Committee reviewed the reports submitted by the management on the state of compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and settlement of statutory payments within the required periods.

External Auditors

The Audit Committee reviewed the independence and performance of the External Auditors, Messrs KPMG, Chartered Accountants. The Committee is comprised solely of independent directors as defined by the voluntary code issued by the national securities exchange or national securities association listing standards and Rule 10A-3 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

The membership of the Audit Committee, together with their roles and attendance at meetings for the year 2023, is set forth below:

Table 10: Members of the Audit Committee

Name of the Member	Role	No. of meetings attended	Remarks
Deshamanya Deva Rodrigo	Committee Member	1/4	Resigned in March 2023
Mr. Roshaan Ranasinghe	Committee Member	4/4	
Mr. Irshad Halaldeen	Committee Member	3/4	
Prof. Sasanka Perera	Committee Member	2/4	
Mr. Manilka Fernando	Committee Member	1/4	

The meetings of the Committee are designed to facilitate and encourage communication among the Committee, the Company, the Company's internal audit function and the Company's independent auditor. The Committee discussed with the independent auditor the overall scope and plans for the annual financial audit.



Signature

Name – Roshaan Ranasinghe
Chairperson Audit Committee



4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 BOARD MEETINGS

CEPA held four regular board meetings in 2023 and 3 informal meetings at the beginning of the year during the first three months of the new ED in office. One special board meeting was held in the second quarter to resolve urgent HR issues due to resignation of many staff. Some Board of Directors met new ED in lunch meetings to guide him in the first quarter. This intensive oversight was relaxed after the first six months once the Board of Directors developed confidence about EDS ability to run CEPA effectively. Finance committee and HR committees met four times each during the year prior to each Board meeting. It conducted annual financial audit, through an external agency (KPMG). The leadership and management were held on the basis of needs. A subscribing member also regularly visited CEPA and requested update about CEPA's work and financial status.

4.2 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

CEPA, like many similar organizations experienced a large number of resignations in 2023. Table 10 provides the details of the resignations. A total of 10 staff left CEPA including four thematic leaders/section heads including the Head of Finance. Majority of the staff left CEPA to go abroad for higher studies. A number of staff also left CEPA to accept better employments. Entire middle layer of the research staff resigned creating doubts about CEPA's survival.

Table 11: Details of Staff Resignations

	Name	Position	Reason for Resignation	Date of resignation
1	Natasha Palanasuriya	Social Cohesion & Reconciliation Team leader	Better Employment/consulting opportunities	31. 01.2023
2	Eranga Amunigama	Program Development Specialist	Better Employment/consulting opportunities	01.03. 2023
3	Samantha Lindsay	Communications Team Leader	Personal	30.04.2023
4	Divya Rex	Research Professional	Higher Studies	03.09.2023
5	Thilini de Alwis	Senior Research Professional	Higher Studies	09.10.2023
6	Gayathri Manori	Head of Finance	Higher Studies	13.10.2023
7	Ruwanthi Herath	Accounts Executive	Higher Studies	31.10.2023

8	Dilshani Ranawaka	Junior Researcher	Higher Studies	15.12.2023
9	Minuri Perera	Research Professional	Better employment opportunity	31.12.2023
1 0	Glen Shumachar	Executive Secretary	Personal	30.09.2023

Attempts to recruit experienced staff failed as good candidates did not applied for the advertised senior positions. Few who applied and interviewed declined the CEPA offer, mainly due to less attractive salary offer of CEPA. Faced with difficulties to recruit senior level professionals, two retired professors were recruited as an interim solution. A special Board meeting was held to discuss the HR issues and it was decided to: implement an interim salary increase; and to recruit fresh graduates from universities and train them under the senior staff. Table 11 presents the details of the recruitments in 2023. Table 3 provides the vacant positions.

Table 12: Recruitments in 2023

	Name	Designation	Thematic area/team
1	Prof. Hemasiri Kotagama	Team Leader	Basic Services and Social Protection
2	Prof. Sisira Pinnawala	Team Leader	Social Cohesion

3	Varangana Ratwatte	Junior Research Professional	Basic Services and Social Protection
4	Hemanthi Kevitiyagala	Head of Finance	Finance
5	Prashani Senadhilankara	Junior Research Professional	Assisting the Executive Director
6	Rohitha Weelihindage	Programme Development Specialist	Reporting to the Executive Director
7	Mohamed Infaz	Accounts Executive	Finance
8	Hasani Rajapaksha	Research Professional	Sustainable Development
9	Nulakshi Dissanayake	Junior Research Professional	Basic Services and Social Protection
10	Kalara Perera	Junior Research Professional	Sustainable Development
11	Nadia Ismail	Research Professional	Social Cohesion
12	Chamathi Serasinghe	Junior Research Professional	Labour Migration

4.3 STAFF RETREAT – 29TH & 30TH OCTOBER 2023, KANDY.

CEPA held its annual retreat in Kandy. It was facilitated by Ms. Gowrie Ponniah, a former ILO expert, who guided the team through the process. Additionally, Attorney Ms. Shyamala Ranarajah participated as a key speaker, providing insights on aligning CEPA's HR procedures with the organization's strategic direction.

A total of 29 CEPA staff members attended the retreat, which provided an opportunity for the team to build stronger connections, foster teamwork, and engage in meaningful fellowship. The retreat was coordinated by Dr. Indika Bulankulame, ensuring a well-organized and productive event.

The staff discussed short to medium strategic directions CEPA need to adopt. Moreover, a considerable amount of time and efforts was devoted to conceptualize a comprehensive poverty study to be undertaken in 2024. The insights and strategies developed during the retreat will be instrumental in shaping CEPA's future research priorities and overall organizational direction, as the team works towards achieving its goals and contributing to the development of the communities it serves.



5. CEPA FAMILY

5.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Prof. Camena Guneratne



Mr. Patrick Vandenbruaene



Mr. Mohamed Irshad Halaldeen



Ms. Shyamali Ranaraja



Prof. Sasanka Perera



Mr. Nayana Mawilmada



Mr. Manilka Fernando

Prof. Camena Guneratne

Professor Camena Gunaratne is an Attorney-at-Law and holds an LLB from the University of Colombo, LLM from Harvard Law School and a PhD from the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She is currently a Professor at the Department of Legal Studies, Open University of Sri Lanka, with prior experience as the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Head of the Inter-Faculty Environmental Studies Unit and Head of the Department of Legal Studies. She was a Smuts Visiting Scholar in Commonwealth Studies at the University of Cambridge and a Fulbright scholar at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She is currently a member of the Incorporated Council of Legal Education and was previously on the Law Commission and the National Committee on Women. She has several years of experience writing and contributing to books, monographs, essays, book chapters and journal articles.

Mr. Patrick Vandenbruaene

Mr. Patrick Vandenbruaene is a Belgian national with over 30 years of experience in Sri Lanka. He currently heads the Development Partners Secretariat, a small office established to support the coordination of over 40 foreign aid missions operating in the country and housed within the UN compound in Colombo. He previously worked for 12 years in a similar capacity as Development Partners' Senior Coordination Officer, contracted by the World Bank. Prior to that he served for 8 years as Humanitarian Adviser to the UN Resident Coordinator. Further to his UN work in Sri Lanka, he supported the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) preparation process in the Philippines and Rwanda. Other experience includes work for the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – UNDESA. He acted as Sri Lanka's Post-tsunami UN Emergency Adviser in the Centre for National Operations (CNO), established within the Presidential Secretariat in the aftermath of the disaster. Previous work includes a 5-year period as Coordinator to Save the Children Fund (UK) Relief and Rehabilitation Programme and 5 years as Project Director to the Integrated Fisheries Development Center (IFDC) in Negombo. Early experience includes voluntary work taking him to Tunisia, India, Thailand, Kenya and Madagascar. His academic qualifications include an Engineering – Master equivalent degree in Agriculture and Rural Development from the Universite du Travail, Tournai, Belgium and a Tropical Agriculture Undergraduate degree from the Haute Ecole Provinciale du Hainaut – Ath, Belgium.

Mr. Mohamed Irshad Halaldeen

Mr. Irshad Halaldeen works as an independent HR consultant and is also a Director in Co-Energi Pvt Ltd. an energy consulting & engineering firm that promotes energy efficiency and conservation among Sri Lankan and regional businesses. He has more than 25 years of senior management experience in local public listed and foreign

institutions. He has served as the Vice President HR & Organization Development at Amana Bank PLC, Head of Talent Management at Al-Rajhi Bank, Saudi Arabia and prior to that as Group HR Director at Hemas Holdings PLC where he also served in the Group Management Committee among others. His areas of specialization within the field of HR are Strategic Change Management, Talent Management and Organization Development. He obtained his MSc in Industrial Management specializing in Organizational Development from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim Norway.

Ms. Shyamali Ranaraja

Ms Shyamali Ranaraja is an Attorney-at-law and holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Colombo and is presently reading for a PhD at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo.

She has been a practitioner in Employment and Labour Law, and a Human Resources Management Consultant since April 1998. She is currently a visiting lecturer and examiner at the University of Peradeniya, Department of Human Resources Management, Department of Law, and a visiting lecturer in the Master's Degree in Business Administration. She also carries out consultancies for varying clients, such as the Asia Foundation, International Labour Organisation, World Bank and European Union among others. Ms. Ranaraja is the President, Alliance Française de Kandy, and a member of the Board of Trustees to administer and manage the paintings and artifacts donated the University of Peradeniya by the late Ian Goonetilleke, and his wife, Roslin.

Prof Sasanka Perera

Professor Sasanka Perera is a professor of Sociology at South Asian University, Delhi, India. He holds a PhD and MA in Anthropology from The University of California, Santa Barbara. He obtained his BA in English Language and Literature, Sociology and Political Science from the University of Colombo. Having been trained as a cultural anthropologist, he served the Department of Sociology at the University of Colombo for a period of 20 years. Since November 2011, he is based at the South Asian University in New Delhi. In his teaching career, he has straddled subject areas that are considered both sociology and anthropology. His research interests are varied and have evolved over the years. It spans cultural and political analysis, education, language politics, urban space and migration. Broadly speaking, his main interest lies in contemporary social theory with an emphasis on the idea of culture and its politics. He has written extensively and published both locally and internationally in the English and Sinhala languages.

Mr Nayana Mawilmada

Nayana Mawilmada is currently President – John Keells Property Group, the real estate development arm of John Keells Holdings and has been heading this cluster since 2017. He has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Hampton University USA, and a masters degree in City Planning with emphasis on International Development and Regional Planning from MIT. He also has an MBA from the Harvard Business School. Prior to this, he was the Head of Investments in the Western Region Megapolis Planning Project, Sri Lanka from May 2016 – June 2017. He was also the Director General – of the Urban Development Authority (UDA) Sri Lanka from January 2015 to April 2016.

Among the many prestigious international positions, he has held, his tenures at the Asian Development Bank Manila as Urban Development Specialist from 2001 – 2007, and Strategic Planning Specialist/Team Leader (Independent International Consultant) 2009-2011 are noteworthy. Nayana was involved in developing Sri Lanka's first National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, covering all key sectors in the economy and engaging 500+ stakeholders—among the most comprehensive such efforts in Asia.

Mr. Manilka Fernando (*from October 2023*)

Mr. Manilka Fernando is a banking and finance professional who has over 40 years of experience, working in financial institutions and other organizations in Sri Lanka and overseas. He has an MBA degree from the University of Georgia, USA. He is also a Fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and Certified Management Accountants of Australia. He has completed executive development programs at Harvard University and INSEAD. He is currently the Chairman of Ceybank Asset Management Ltd. and has held Non-Executive Director positions at several organizations including Bank of Ceylon, Laugfs Group, Pership Group, Softlogic Group, and other organizations.

He has held senior management positions in the financial services sector at Citibank, NDB Bank, Mashreq Bank (Dubai, UAE) and Al Rajhi Bank (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia). In addition, he has carried out management consulting/advisory projects at a range of organizations. He has been a lecturer in strategic management and finance at the University of Colombo, Institute of Chartered Accountants, and other institutions.

5.1.1 Outgoing Board of Directors

Deshamanya Parakrama Devasiri Rodrigo (*up to March 2023*)

Deshamanya Deva Rodrigo is currently serving as a Member of our Audit Committee. He has also served on our Board previously for a period in February 2011. Mr. Rodrigo, a Chartered Accountant, had a career with the International Accounting and Consulting Firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers, joining it in East Africa in 1974 and serving in its London Offices in 1980. Being a Founding Partner of Pricewaterhouse Coopers Sri Lanka, he held the position of Senior Partner from 1992 to 2006, when he retired from the firm. He is a past Chairman of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. He has previously held public office as a Director of People's Bank and as a member of the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission. He was also a member of the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and a member of the National Council for Administration. He also serves as a non-Executive Director of Ambeon Capital PLC and Cargills Ceylon PLC.

Prof. Prasanthi Gunawardena (*up to March 2023*)

Dr. Prasanthi Gunawardena is currently the Head of the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura where she has been a Senior Lecturer since 1998. She has also been teaching the subject of Environmental economics at many other universities in Sri Lanka. Dr. Gunawardena has additionally served as an environmental economist for many government institutions, and she pioneered in developing a 'green account for forestry sector in Sri Lanka'. She obtained a BSc Special Degree in Botany from the University of Kelaniya in 1990 and her PhD in Environmental Economics from the University of Edinburgh in 1997. Her research interests include economic valuation of natural environment and pollution impacts, equity issues, green accounting and investigations into the entropic limits of economic growth.

5.2 SUBSCRIBING MEMBERS

Sunil Bastian

Research Fellow, International Centre for Ethnic Studies

Dileni Gunawardena, PhD

Professor of Economics, Department of Economics and Statistics,
University of Peradeniya

Chandra Jayaratne

Former Chairman, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Sasanka Perera, PhD

Professor & Chair, Department of Sociology; Dean, Faculty of Social
Sciences, South Asian University

Christoph Feyen

Director of YUMA Foundation

Darini Rajasingham – Senanayake, PhD

Freelance Consultant

R M K Ratnayake, PhD

Director, Sanasa Bank & Director, Sanasa Higher Education Agency

Kalinga Tudor Silva, PhD

Senior Professor, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya

Nireka Weeratunge, PhD

Independent Researcher

Wimal Nanayakkara

Consultant, Institute of Policy Studies

5.2.1 Out Going of Subscribing Members

Hiran Dias, PhD (*up to February 2023*)

Former Professor of Geography and the President, University of Colombo

Nimal Sandaratne, PhD (*Up to May 2023*)

Former Director of CEPA.

Anila Dias Bandaranaike, PhD (up to November 2023)

Former Assistant Governor, Central Bank of Sri Lanka

6. CEPA TEAM

6.1 LEADERSHIP

Herath Gunatilake, PhD (Hawaii)

Executive Director (January 2023 onwards)



Dr Gunatilake has a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture (Sri Lanka), Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture (Norway), Masters in Natural Resources Management (Norway), and PhD in Resource Economics (United States). and served at the University of Peradeniya (1986 – 2004) in various positions including Professor and

the Head, Department of Agricultural Economics he notable training he has undergone includes training on Environmental Economics and Policy Analysis at Harvard University, USA, in 1993, and a Programme on Leadership for Sustainable Development, Cambridge University, UK, in 2011. He joined ADB as an environment specialist and served as natural resource economist, economist, and energy economist in different departments. He was also Director of the Environment and Safeguards Division in the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department of ADB. He has published more than 50 journal articles; about 25 ADB publications; and five books on energy, natural resources, and environmental economics. His recent publications are on economics of biofuel, hydropower development and economic growth, impact evaluation of energy sector investments, private sector participation in infrastructure provisions, assessing and unbundling demand for water and electricity, energy trade and

regional cooperation, and transport sector investments, economic growth and poverty reduction and agricultural land consolidation for poverty reduction.

Dr. Gunatilake was a former member of the Board of South Asia Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE). He is a Fellow of the Institute of Policy Studies Colombo, Visiting Professor at Kelaniya and Peradeniya Universities, Member of Agricultural Economists Association, and Member of Research and Training Committee in Hector Kobbekaduwa Research and Training Institute.

Karin Fernando, MA (Brandeis University)

Team Leader - Sustainable Development



Karin has a Master's in Sustainable International Development from Brandeis University, USA. She has over 16 years' experience in implementing Development and Environmental Management projects with NGOs and multilateral agencies. Karin has in-depth knowledge and expertise in Sustainable Development,

Monitoring and Evaluation, Facilitation and Training. She has carried out many research assignments, consultancies, generated and contributed to many knowledge outputs. Karin is also a Qualitative Researcher. At CEPA, she heads the Sustainable Development Thematic Programme that concentrates on building evidence and generating a dialogue on sustainable systems in order to integrate this knowledge into development policy and practice at local and global levels. Over the past 12 years at CEPA, she has led and managed multiple research projects that cover numerous topics related to the environment and climate change, estate sector, labour, education, infrastructure, and resettlement.

Hemanthi Kevitiyagala , FCA

Head of Finance (August 2023 onward)



Hemanthi is a Fellow Member the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka and also a Fellow member of the Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka. She had worked at KPMG Sri Lanka in the capacity of Tax Manager and Audit Manager during her stay from 1996 to 2002. extensive exposure to Taxation and

related issues and also Auditing and Accounting relating to Quoted Companies, Limited liability Companies, etc. Further She had served as the Director Finance of Urban Development Authority. Her working experience includes Government Sector Institutions like Outer Circular Highway Project under Road Development Authority, Sri Jayewardenepura Hospital in the capacity of Accountant. Also had worked at Altair as the Finance Manager to Special Authorized Officer, the Institute of Chartered Accountants as the Head of Finance, Chief Financial Officer of CIFI, Finance Manager at Ceylinco Ltd, Overseas experience includes working as the Accountant for A& P Dominion and Export Packers in Toronto Canada and Finance Manager at KGL Investments in Kuwait. With 26 years of post-qualified experience, had gained exposure in Investment Appraisals, Tax Planning Treasury Management, Auditing and Accounting which covers different business sectors such as Regulatory Authorities, Service Providers, Hospitals, Professional Institutes, Real Estate, Pharmaceuticals, Finance Companies and Construction.

Gayathri Manori, ACA

Head of Finance – upto November 2023



Manori is an Associate Member and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Accounting from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. She is also an Associate member of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka. Since beginning her career at KPMG, she has gained seven years of experience in taxation and auditing.

Prior to joining CEPA in January 2013, she served as the Accountant at the Colombo Pharmacy Co. PLC, for two years, gaining commercial experience in the pharmaceutical and real estate sectors. At CEPA, she is responsible for the preparation and presentation of financial statements, in compliance with Sri Lanka Financial Reports Standards relevant for small and medium enterprises, handles taxation of the company, liaises with auditors and provides other financial information.

Gayathri Lokuge, PhD (Wageningen)

Team Leader - Livelihood and Employment



Gayathri obtained her PhD from the Wageningen University in the Netherlands, studying how intersectional social identities shape livelihoods in post-war contexts. She has thirteen years of research experience, and experience as a trainer/facilitator on qualitative research methods. Her past research and publications include post-war

development and rebuilding, livelihoods, gender and intersectional identities, entrepreneurship, with a specific focus on coastal communities. Her methodological orientation is qualitative and includes ethnography. At CEPA, Gayathri leads the Livelihoods and Employment Thematic area.

M. A. Mohamed Munas, Ph.D (Radboud University, Nijmegen)
Team Leader – Labour Migration



Munas is a doctoral candidate at Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands. His doctoral research looks at the complexities of diaspora engagement in post-war communities, with a special focus on the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. Munas received his Master's Degree in Economics from the University of

Colombo and Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture at the University of Peradeniya. Munas's research work focuses on poverty, conflict, fisheries, migration and diaspora issues. He has also conducted mid-term and ex-post evaluations of several development projects in conflict-affected areas of Sri Lanka. Munas task managed a three-year research and policy programme that focuses on new forms of diaspora and private sector engagement for post-war development, reconciliation and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. He currently leads the Diasporas and Development Thematic at CEPA.

Sisira Pinnawala - PhD (Australian National University)

Team Leader – Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (April 2023 onwards)



Sisira Pinnawala - PhD (Australian National University)

Dr. Sisira Pinnawala is a retired University academic. He completed his undergraduate education at the University of Peradeniya in 1974 and joined the academic staff of the Department of Sociology as an Assistant Lecturer in 1975. Dr. Pinnawala has a Master's Degree

in Human Settlements Development Planning from the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok in and obtained his Ph.D. in Sociology from the Australian National University in Canberra. From August 1993 to July 1994, Dr. Pinnawala was a Senior Fulbright Research Fellow in the Peace Studies Program of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell University. He has also served as Director of the Sri Lanka Foundation in Colombo from 2003 to 2005. After retirement from the University Service in 2016 Dr. Pinnawala was appointed as Academic Consultant of the newly established Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHSS) of the University of Peradeniya where he served for two years. He also has served as consultant to number of national and international organizations including the World Bank and the Asian Development. Dr. Pinnawala's research interests are Ethnic Conflict, Peace building and reconciliation, Human rights, Poverty and Social Protection

Natasha Palansuriya, MA (City, University of London)

Team Leader - Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (up to January 2023)



Natasha Palansuriya is a Senior Research Professional working on the thematic areas of Social Cohesion and Reconciliation, and Diasporas and Development. Her most recent work at CEPA was as Lead Evaluator for the final evaluation of Strengthening Civil Society in Sri Lanka: Empowering Women for Inclusive and

Sustainable Transitional Justice and Reconciliation (July – August 2020), and Technical Specialist for an Independent Final Evaluation of OHCHR's Thematic support on the Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Sri Lanka. She has also successfully designed and coordinated the Short Course on Migration for two consecutive years. Concurrently, she is completing her PhD at City, University of London, where her research focuses on the Sri Lankan Tamil diasporas transnational engagement in the transitional justice process of Sri Lanka. Natasha, also, has a master's in international politics and Human Rights from City, University of London where her dissertation explored the post-war reconciliation process of Sri Lanka.

Indika Bulankulame, PhD (University of Colombo)

Team Leader -- Training and Capacity Building



Indika has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Colombo and an MPhil in Social Anthropology from the University of Sussex, UK. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the Elliot School of International Relations, George Washington University in Washington D.C in 2009, and was also the recipient of the UNESCO Fellowship in 2001 for her studies

at the University of Sussex. Indika has worked with several bilateral organisations and NGOs in areas related to conflict, reconciliation, land rights, land distribution and water tenure. Her strengths are in qualitative research with over 15 years' fieldwork experience. She has also many publications to her credit. She is a visiting academic in the Master's in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. She also has experience in diverse fields of teaching for undergraduate and masters students at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Prior to joining CEPA she worked as Head of Public Relations at the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Samantha Lindsay, MDP (University of Peradeniya)

Team Leader - Communications and Research Uptake (up to April 2023)



Samantha has a Masters in Development Practice from the University of Peradeniya, and a Bachelor's Degree specialising in Monetary Economics from the same University. She has over 25 years of work experience, having worked in the private sector for a decade in HR and Corporate Relations, and thereafter in the development sector,

including the Asian Development Bank. Prior to joining CEPA, she was working as an independent Communications Consultant. The fields she has worked in spans corporate and project communications, media engagement, external relations, civil society engagement, advocacy and knowledge management. At CEPA, she is the leader of the Communications Programme.

Dr. Hemesiri Bandara Kotagama

Team Leader – Basic services & social Protection (March 2023 onwards)



Dr. Hemesiri Kotagama, B.Sc. (Agric. Hons), University of Peradeniya, M.Sc (Natural Resource Economics), University of Philippines at Los Banoas, Ph.D (Natural Resource and Environmental Economics) University of London. In addition, he has diploma training on project analysis, environment economic

analysis, environment and agricultural development, at University of Harvard, Gothenberg University and University of London. Dr. Kotagama is a retired Professor having served University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman. He has also served as the Chairman of Vocational Training Authority, Sri Lanka and served as the voluntary Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sri Lankan School Muscat, Oman. In addition, he has served on several national committees on environmental management and tertiary education. He has published 38 scientific papers in refereed journals, 29 non-refereed scientific papers, 30 scientific presentation based publications, 14 scientific monographs, 3 text books, 6 chapters in text books. He has been in the review committees of 10 scientific journals and has been the main supervisor of 27 postgraduate research thesis. Dr. Kotagama has undertaken 35 consultancy assignments relating to national development (environment, agriculture and food security)

in Sri Lanka and the sultanate of Oman with national and international organizations and has been a resource person for 47 professional training programs. He has received several awards for his academic and research work and a presidential award appreciating professional contributions made in the areas of agriculture, environment and economics education in Sri Lanka. Dr Kotagama's generic professional expertise is on: Financial, economic and environmental benefit-cost analysis of investment projects; Environmental impact analysis with environmental impact valuation; Food security analysis; Financial analysis of farming systems and technology; Agricultural and environmental planning and policy analysis; Teaching generic economics, environmental and resource economics, development economics etc, with Analytical skills on Mathematical modelling/ operations research, Econometrics, Social survey techniques.

Nadhiya Najab, MDS (University of Colombo)

Team Leader – Gender and Development



Nadhiya Najab, has over seven years of research experience in the areas of post-war resettlement, labour and livelihoods, and employability of vocational training graduates. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as elsewhere in Sri Lanka. She has contributed to a number of CEPA publications including publishing a

working paper on the political economy of beedi rollers in Sri Lanka. Prior to joining the research team full-time, Nadhiya was a core member of the communication team at CEPA. Nadhiya has a Masters

in Development Studies from the University of Colombo, complementing her Bachelor's degree in Economics and Bachelor's degree in Communication with a minor in International Studies from Monash University in Malaysia.

Eranga Amunugama, BSc (Manchester Metropolitan University)
Head of Operations and Resource Mobilisation (up to March 2023)



Eranga received his Bachelor's Degree in Business from the Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, specialising in Marketing. He has over nine years of experience in the private sector and in development agencies, such as CARE International. He has been involved in programme design, resource mobilisation and

private sector partnerships. At CEPA, Eranga heads the strategising of Operations & Resource Mobilisation which involves programme development initiatives and partnerships.

Rajindra Rohitha, M.Sc (Asian Institute of Technology)
Programme Development Specialist (October 2023 onward)



Rajindra Rohitha has a B.Sc. (Agric.), University of Peradeniya, and a M.Sc (Aquaculture), Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand. He also has a Postgraduate diploma in Regional Industrial Development from NIBM Sri Lanka. Additionally, he has followed some advanced courses in environmental and

resource economics, affiliated to international networks. He is an experienced development practitioner worked as an expatriate in International Organizations and INGOs in several countries such as Zambia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. His areas of interests are Food & Nutrition Security, Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Livelihoods. During his career, he has notable innovations; some of them are forest market gardens as a climate smart cropping system, farmers field school in climate change adaptation, threshold level investment methodology in livelihood development and use of analytical hierarchy process in vulnerability analysis. He is also an expert in result based planning process.

6.2 RESEARCH TEAM

6.2.1 SENIOR RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS

Thamindri Aluvihare, MA (University of Colombo)

Senior Research Professional



Thamindri Aluvihare holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Studies at Monash University while majoring in Economics, Mass Communications and International Relations. She obtained her Master's Degree in Arts in International Relations from the University of Colombo with a focus on Political Communications

exploring the evolution of (digital) media and its impact on foreign policy formulation and dissemination. Her previous work experience was in civil society in both local and international NGOs and subsequently in public service. Her work with the civil society focused primarily on post-war areas such as engagement of Sri Lankans living overseas and implementation of National Language Policy. As a public servant, she was affiliated to the Office of the State Minister of Finance in her capacity as a Research Officer. While primarily working on Social Cohesion related research, she intends to explore at length the nexus between digital media transformation and social cohesion.

Thilini de Alwis, MEM (University of Colombo.)
Senior Research Professional (up to October 2023)



Thilini de Alwis holds a Bachelor of Arts Special Degree in English from the University of Colombo and a Master of Environment Management from the Faculty of Graduate Studies University of Colombo. She is also an Attorney at Law and was at the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka inquiring into violations of fundamental

rights. At Women and Media Collective she worked on themes of women's political representation, unpaid care work and the gendered impact of violent extremism. She has a background in M&E having completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and worked as M&E Officer at the Ministry of Environment on climate change adaptation. Her areas of interest include Environment and gender.

Basith Inadeen, BA (University of Colombo)

Senior Research Professional



Basith has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science from the University of Colombo. He is studying for his Master's in Conflict and Peace Studies at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. He holds international licenses from the Wageningen University, The Netherlands, on Multi Stakeholder Process and Social Learnings.

and on one of the social accountability tools – the Citizen Report Card, the methodology introduced by the Public Affairs Centre, India. He has over seventeen years of extensive experience in mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) data collection at thinks tanks and research institutes, and at CEPA has taken the lead in implementing projects with social accountability tools -the Citizen Report Card — Good Governance transparency and accountability tool. He is attached to the Basic Services and Social Protection research team of CEPA.

6.2.2 RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS

Nadiya Azmy, BSc (Edinburgh Napier University)

Research Professional



Nadiya is currently completing her Masters in Climate change & Environmental Management at the University of Colombo. Her research focuses on climate change and adaptation to social-ecological change in fishing communities. She has a Bachelor's degree in Microbiology and Biotechnology from Edinburgh Napier

University. Her research has focused on exploring anthropogenic impacts on Sal Forests in Dehradun India, characterising phytoplankton communities in basin estuaries associated with Mangroves in the western coast of Sri Lanka, and a project exploring impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns on coastal fisheries in Sri Lanka. She has over 3 years of experience working in the sustainability and conservation research space. She currently works under the sustainability thematic at CEPA.

Dhivyaa Maanikkam Rex, MSoc (University of Colombo)
Research Professional (up to September 2023)



Dhivyaa has completed her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and she has a Master's Degree in Sociology from the University of Colombo. She has experience working with different communities in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. She also has 5 years of experience in research,

data collection and project evaluation. She works under Social Cohesion and Reconciliation thematic area at CEPA.

Dilshani N Ranawaka, MEcon (Reading)
Research Professional (up to December 2023)



Dilshani has a BA honours in Economics from the University of Colombo and is currently reading for her Masters in Economics. She holds a diploma in International Trade from the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS) and is currently working under the thematic Basic Services and Social Protection at CEPA. She has published under the themes of migration and labour in Sri Lanka.

Minuri Perera, BSc (University of London), BA (University of Colombo) *Research Professional*



Minuri holds a BSc Honours Degree in International Development from the University of London and a BA Honours Degree in Economics specialising in Trade and Industry from the University of Colombo. Prior to joining CEPA's Team, Minuri was employed as an Intern and a research assistant at CEPA.

She is currently working under the Sustainable Development thematic.

Shaneendra Amarasinghe, BSc (University of London), BA (University of Colombo) *Research Professional*



Shaneendra holds a BSc Honours Degree in International Relations from the University of London and a BA Honours Degree in English (Special) from the University of Colombo. Previously, he was employed as an intern and research assistant at CEPA. He is currently working under the Social Cohesion thematic.

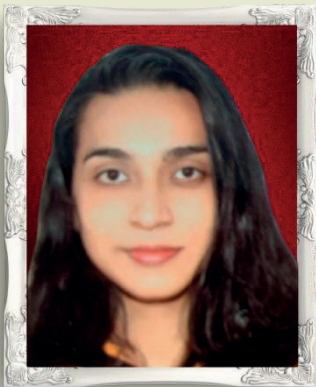
Heli de Alwis BSc (Rajarata University) *Research Professional*



Heli holds a BSc Special Degree in Agriculture, majoring in Agricultural Economics and Extension from the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka and currently reading for MSc in Agricultural Economics at the University of Peradeniya. She has a Diploma in International Relations from the Bandaranaike Center for International Studies(BCIS).

She is currently working under the thematic Livelihood and Employment at CEPA .

Nadia Ismail, LLB (University of London), BA (University of Colombo) *Research Professional (November 2023 onwards)*



Nadia holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of London and a BA Honours Degree in English (Special) from the University of Colombo. She is currently working under the Social Cohesion thematic.

Areas of interest: Gender, minority rights, women's issues, social activism

Hasani Rajapaksha, M.Phil. (University of Peradeniya)

Research Professional (November 2023 onwards)



Hasani has achieved her B.Sc. degree in Agricultural Technology and Management, specialized in Applied Economics and Business Management. Recently, she has completed her M.Phil. in Agricultural Economics and the research was based on an assessment of total factor productivity and technical efficiency in food production systems.

She has more than 6 years of experience as a Research Assistant at National Science Foundation, Colombo and an Investigator at Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo. Currently, she works at CEPA as a Researcher under the thematic, Sustainability.

6.2.3 JUNIOR RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS

Varangana Ratwatte , MA (University of Peradeniya)

Junior Research Professionals (August 2023 onwards)



She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Peradeniya 2019, MA in Economics, Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Peradeniya 2021 and is currently reading for her Mphil. in Economics at the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, She has 3 plus years of academic

experience and a keen interest to work in the field of economics. She is attached to the Basic Services and Social Protection thematic.

Prashani Senadhilankara , BSc (University of Peradeniya)

Junior Research Professionals (September 2023 Onwards)



Prashani holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Agricultural Technology and Management, Majoring in Applied Economics and Business Management at University of Peradeniya in 2022 and currently reading for Masters in Agricultural Economics at the University of Peradeniya. She is currently working under the administration of CEPA.

Chamathi Serasinghe, BA (University of Ruhuna)
Junior Research Professional (November 2023 Onwards)



Chamathi obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree (specialized in Sociology) from the University of Ruhuna in 2021 and was awarded Prof. R.M. Ranaweera Banda Memorial Gold Medal for obtaining the highest GPA in the Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna. She has one plus years of academic reeseach experience and she is interested in

conducting research in the field of women and gender related studies. She is currently working under labour migration thematic and livelihoods and employment thematic.

Kalara Perera, LLB (University of London), BA (University of Colombo)

Junior Research Professional (November 2023 onwards)



Kalara holds a LLB Honours from the University of London and a BA Honours Degree in International Relations from the University of Colombo and is currently reading for her Masters in International Human Rights Law from the Birmingham City University. She is interested in interdisciplinary research and advocating for human rights.

She has published on gender, human rights, refugees, surveillance and international law.

6.3 FINANCE TEAM

Chathurika De Silva

Accountant



Chathurika has completed her Operational Level in Business Accounting at the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA-UK) and is currently studying for Managerial Level Case Study examination. She has 12 years of experience at CEPA and is responsible for the provision of accounts, project costing, liaising

with donors and providing other financial information.

Ruwanthi Herath (*BCom*) (*South Eastern University*)

Accounts Executive (up to November 2023)



Ruwanthi has a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce (B.com Special) with a Second-Class Upper Division from the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. She has completed the Executive Level of Chartered Accountancy Examinations. She also completed the Operational Level and obtained a diploma in Accounting and Business Studies of the Certified

Management Accountants of Sri Lanka and is currently studying at a managerial level. At CEPA, she is responsible for checking day-to-day

payments, payment processing, assisting in preparation of accounts, bank reconciliation and assisting in office administration.

Infaz Issadeen (B.B .Mgt) , University of Kelaniya
Accounts Executive (October 2023 onwards)



Infaz holds a Bachelor of Business Management (Special) Degree in Finance from the University of Kelaniya. In addition to his academic qualifications, he has achieved accreditation from the AATSL and is presently pursuing the Business level program at the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, he is actively engaged in

expanding his expertise by advancing through the Analyst Level I program at the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Sri Lanka and the Managerial Level program at the Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka. With a experience exceeding seven years in the finance and accounting domain..

Shakila Sooriyaarachchi, (B.Com) University of Kelaniya
Accounts Assistant



Shakila has a Bachelor of Commerce Special Degree in Financial Management with a Second Class Upper Division from the University of Kelaniya. She has completed the Executive level of Chartered Accountancy and is reading for Corporate Level at the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. At CEPA, her work includes

day-to-day payment processing, operational data entry for management accounts, bank reconciliation, Managing Information System, other finance related tasks and assisting in the office administration.

6.4 ADMINISTRATION TEAM

N. E. B. Ayomi (PgDLRHRM) University of Colombo
Human Resources Executive



Ayomi is currently following a Master's in Labour Relations and Human Resource Management at the University of Colombo. She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Labour Relations and Human Resource Management from the University of Colombo and Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from Uva Wellassa University. As one of the

10 young leaders selected globally Ayomi had the privilege of attending the Winter School for Think Tankers in Geneva in Jan-Feb 2019 under the On Think Tanks and Think Tank Initiative Fellowship. Her work at CEPA includes maintaining and processing administrative work related to Human Resources.

D. M. N. U. Guneratne
Administrative Officer



Udaya Guneratne joined CEPA in December 2001. He is responsible for attending to the functions of the front office reception area, coordination of events, assisting in filing for the Accounts Division, monitoring costs of logistics in the field, and assisting in office administration.

Glen Schumacher
Executive Secretary (up to August 2023)



Glen holds a UK Diploma in Business Management/Administration with over 30 years' experience in Administration, Human Resource and Facilities management both locally and overseas working in diverse business fields.

Sherami Selvathasan

Front Office Coordinator (March 2023 onwards)



Sherami has vast experience in administration and Secretarial work for more than 18 years and has followed a course at the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM). She has experience in many areas including, sales, photography, procurement and child protection primarily working in the NGO/INGO sector.

6.5 RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Ravindra Deyshappriya

Ravindra Deyshappriya is a Senior Lecturer in Economics at Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka and also a PhD candidate at School of Economics, Finance & Marketing of RMIT University, Australia. He holds a first-class degree in Economics from University of Peradeniya, followed by a master degree in Development Economics from Nagoya University, Japan. Before joining with Uva Wellassa University, he worked as the Director (Research) at Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute attached to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and as a Research Professional at Centre for Poverty Analysis. His research mainly focuses on empirical analyses based on both development microeconomics and macroeconomics principles.

Vengadeshvaran Sarma

Vengadeshvaran Sarma is an Assistant Professor of Business Economics at the University of Nottingham, Malaysia. He received his PhD from the University of Nottingham in 2015. He is interested in policy-relevant research on topics related to education, migration, displacement, structural transformation, and land reform. His current projects examine the educational inequality and compulsory schooling policies in Sri Lanka; the effect of parental migration on left-behind Sri Lankan families; and the role of land disputes and the process of industrialisation in India, Nepal, and Japan.

Hasanthi Tennakoon

Hasanthi Tennakoon has a Bachelor's degree in Development Communication from the University of Philippines and a Master's degree in Environmental Management from the University of Tasmania. She is currently pursuing her postgraduate doctoral degree (PhD) in environmental law and economics with the University of Newcastle, Australia. Hasanthi has extensive experience in corporate sustainability and her areas of focus are environmental and social sustainability. She has undertaken research and impact studies under CEPA's migration and post conflict development thematic and has also worked as a social safeguards consultant for the World Bank.

Tushani Kalugalagedera

Tushani Kalugalagedera is a freelance editor/researcher. She has a LLB and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of London, and a B.Sc. in Estate Management from the University of Reading. She received her Master's in Economics from the University of Colombo. Her main areas of interest are in sustainable energy and community-based development. Her previous areas of research include microfinance, social welfare and education.

Navam Niles

Navam Niles is involved in both academia and research. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of London's International Programme, where he lectures on subjects including International Relations, International Political Theory, and Global Environmental Problems and Politics. Meanwhile, his research explores the evolution of global governance, especially in the context of transnational

problems such as sustainable development and climate change. At CEPA, his work has mostly focused on sustainable development and approaches to national policy coherence.

Tanuja Thurairajah

Tanuja Thurairajah is reading for her PhD at the Human Geography Unit/Department of Geography of the University of Zürich in Switzerland. She has a MA in Peace & Conflict Studies from the University of Innsbruck. Her current research looks at post-war engagement and agency of Tamils of Sri Lankan origin living in Switzerland. She is co-creator of an oral-history project, PROJECT Belonging capturing personal stories of the Tamil diaspora in Switzerland and has produced the ‘diaspora’ segment of the digital commemoration of 30 years of the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983, conceptualised and curated by Groundviews. Her research interests include diasporas, migration and conflict. Tanuja has over a decade of experience working in the development and humanitarian sector in Sri Lanka working for organisations such as Practical Action, Law & Society Trust (LST), GIZ – Sri Lanka and as a researcher for the Consultations Task force on Reconciliation Mechanisms (CTF).

6.6 RESEARCH FELLOWS

Udan Fernando, PhD (Amsterdam)

Over the past 20 years, Udan has held leadership positions in Sri Lankan development organisations and was a senior staff member in a research and consultancy organisation in the Netherlands, working in Europe, East and West Africa and Southeast Asia. Also, he has functioned as a freelance consultant in Sri Lanka and abroad. He has had academic and professional training in management, law, labour studies and international

development cooperation. He has taught in universities in Sri Lanka and the Netherlands as a visiting academic.

Priyanthi Fernando, MA (Leicester)

Priyanthi Fernando, has a Masters Degree in Mass Communications from the University of Leicester and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Peradeniya. A social development professional with over 30 years of experience both in Sri Lanka and overseas, she has worked in the areas of technology, infrastructure and poverty. She has led a specialist global network, managed the Sri Lankan arm of an international NGO, and worked with a grassroots women's organization. Priyanthi was the Executive Director of the Centre for Poverty Analysis till February 2015 and is now an international consultant on gender, post war, transport, and communication.

Dr. Dileni Gunewardena, PhD American University

Dileni Gunewardena is Professor (Chair) of Economics at the University of Peradeniya. She holds a doctorate from the American University and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Peradeniya. Her research is mainly in Development Microeconomics and includes empirical analyses relating to poverty measurement, child nutrition, gender wage inequality and ethnic inequality in Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Dileni has been involved in the design of Policy Frameworks for Poverty Alleviation in Sri Lanka and in analyses for progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Sri Lanka. Having been a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California-Riverside, and a visiting scholar at University of Warwick, U.K, she is currently an Echidna Global Scholar at the Brookings Institute, Washington, D.C.

Arusha Cooray, PhD (University of New South Wales)

Arusha Cooray served as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Norway, Finland and Iceland. She holds a PhD in Economics from the University of New South Wales, Australia, and a MA(Economics) and BA(Economics) from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She has lectured at the University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, Victoria University, University of Wollongong, University of Tasmania, Macquarie University, the University of Colombo, and held a Professorship in economics at the University of Nottingham Malaysia. Arusha has held visiting positions at the University of Oxford, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, University of Gottingen, Australian National University, and Macquarie University. She is a fellow of the United Nations UNU-WIDER and Centre for Applied Macroeconomic Analysis, Australian National University. In addition to being an International consultant, Arusha has undertaken research on several issues and has published widely in academic journals including the Journal of Macroeconomics, Macroeconomic Dynamics, Oxford Economic Papers, Public Choice among others.

Nihal Perera, PhD (Binghamton University)

Nihal Perera is Professor Chair of the Department of Urban Planning at Ball State University and the founder and Director of CapAsia, an immersive semester programme based on collaboration in Asia for American students. In addition to teaching in the USA, he has taught in Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The two-time Fulbright Scholar awardee: to China (2006–07) and Myanmar (2015-16) was also Senior Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore (2010) and Melting Pot Fellow at KMITL,

Bangkok. He has also received three Fulbright-Hays awards and a Graham Foundation award. Dr. Perera, a leading scholar of social space, focuses his research on how people create/negotiate their own spaces (i.e., create lived spaces). His publications include articles on Feminizing the City, competing modernities in Chandigarh, competing visions for Dharavi and books entitled Decolonizing Ceylon, Transforming Asian Cities, and People's Spaces. His recent publication is a special issue of the *Bhumi* journal on Development.

Georg E. Frerks, PhD (Wageningen)

Georg Frerks has a PhD in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and a Master's in Rural Development Sociology from Wageningen University, the Netherlands. He has been Professor of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management at the Centre for Conflict Studies, Utrecht University, holds the Chair of International Security Studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy and was the Professor of Disaster Studies at Wageningen University till mid-2014. Trained as a sociologist, he specialises in contemporary conflicts and emergencies. With a long-term experience in diplomacy and policy advice, Frerks is interested in the sociological and governance aspects of conflict and disasters. Frerks has a distinguished record in the evaluation and monitoring of development, conflict and disaster programmes and has published widely on the subject of his research.

Kulasabanathan Romeshun

Kulasabanathan Romeshun, was the Team Leader of Basic Services and Social Protection thematic and Senior Research Professional at CEPA carried out an overseeing and advisory function on most of CEPA's quantitative research related work. He has worked in the development sector for the past 25 years before joining CEPA and has extensive work

experience in government and funding organisations. He has a Master's degree in Financial Economics from the University of Colombo. He joined CEPA in 2010 as a Senior Researcher and has worked on studies related to poverty, education, employment/ livelihood, financial intermediation. Mr. Kulasabanathan is currently working with CEPA on a few ongoing projects.

6.7 OTHERS SUPPORT SERVICES

Consultants

Mr. Romeshun Kulasabanathan

Mr. Imam Adhnan

Ms. Thanuja Thurairajah

Ms. Agana Gunawardhana

Ms. Chaturanga Weerasekara

Ms. Sureni Wijesinghe

Interns

Ms. Ashani Singhapuliarachchi

Mr. Kuldeep Bhattacharjya

Ms. Pallavi Kiran Borkar

Buwanajee Priyathma Coralage

Methara Serasundera

Jayani Kokila

