

The Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK



15<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
BALL

2019



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## The Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK

UK registered Charity No: 1145786

# 15<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY BALL

## *EVENT PROGRAMME*

7.00pm	Live Music
7.15pm	Puja Dance
7.25pm	Performance by Osandi Kodagoda
7.30pm	President's Address
7.40pm	Past Presidents' awards
7.55pm	Kandyan Dance
8.05pm	Performance by Osandi Kodagoda
8.10pm	Dinner
9.30pm	Fusion Dance
9.40pm	Dutch Auction
10.00pm	Music and Dance Floor
11.00pm	Raffle Draw
11.15pm	Music and Dance Floor
12.30am	Vote of thanks



## President's Message

### **I warmly welcome you all to the APSL 15th Anniversary Ball.**

APSL has grown from strength to strength over the past 15 years and we are proud to serve the Sri Lankan community both in the UK as well as Sri Lanka. APSL is built on a strong foundation with professionals from different disciplines, established networks, track record of successful projects and credibility to achieve our vision to help develop a peaceful, just and prosperous Sri Lanka.

Every year we organise numerous events in the UK, namely Ask the Expert series, Young Professionals Event, We Sri Lanka, Living in the UK, Student Event, Mentoring and Research Symposium. Moreover, we successfully deliver number of projects in Sri Lanka, namely Scholarship Scheme, Solar Villages, Student Essentials, Flood Relief, Cancer Relief, Chronic Kidney Disease Relief and APSL Awards.

Whilst we will continue to deliver above successful projects and events, we are also actively looking to expand the project and

event portfolio. Consequently, we plan to focus on supporting Sri Lankan students in the UK, providing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for members and supporting education of Sri Lankan children during the coming year.

Tonight's event is packed with live music, Kandyan and fusion dances, performance by a young star in the making, raffle draw with exciting prizes, Dutch auction featuring a signed cricket bat by the Sri Lankan team and a sumptuous 3-course dinner.

I hope you thoroughly enjoy this wonderful evening with us, and I look forward to see you at our future events.

Thank you for your continued support to APSL.

### **Dr. Mahesh de Silva**

PhD, CEng, MIET, Six Sigma Green Belt,  
Prince 2 Practitioner

#### **President**

Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK (APSL-UK)





*High Commissioner*

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



**Message by H.E. Manisha Gunasekera, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in the United Kingdom**

I am pleased to extend my warm congratulations to the Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK on the occasion of its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball.

The Association of Professional Sri Lankans (APSL) in the UK has over the years become a leading organisation of the British Sri Lankan community fostering cooperation and friendship among the professional community in the UK. I am pleased to see APSL engaged in and expanding its numerous charitable activities since its inception. The support offered by APSL to enhance opportunities for quality education in Sri Lanka through scholarships, knowledge sharing, and mentoring, is noteworthy. The charitable activities of APSL including the cancer relief project and the solar village project contribute towards the upliftment of the quality of life of Sri Lankans.

I am also appreciative of the close and productive cooperation APSL has maintained with the Sri Lanka High Commission in the UK on matters of mutual interest. I have had the privilege to participate in several meetings organised by APSL in the past year including its Annual General Meeting. I commend APSL for setting the bar high in terms of professionalism, and for the efforts taken to harness the talents of the younger generation of professionals among the British Sri Lankan community. We at the High Commission stand ready to extend our support to APSL as deemed necessary. As the Patron of APSL, it is a matter of pride for me to witness the dynamic trajectory of the Association which is a valuable resource serving Sri Lanka's national interest.

I wish APSL a successful 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball, and the very best in its future activities. I wish everyone present an enjoyable evening!

Manisha Gunasekera

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# Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK (APSL-UK)

## Past President's Messages



### Founder President's Message



This year, the Association of Sri Lankan Professionals in the UK, (APSL) celebrates their 15th Anniversary, gloriously at Heathrow Marriot Hotel.

I am so proud and delighted to witness, how the Association of Sri Lankan Professionals, provide such valuable contributions continually, to those who need assistances in our mother country- Sri Lanka.

The idea of forming a Sri Lankan professionals' association, emerged to my mind in 2003 as I noticed that so many Professionals, belonging

to different sectors, such as Engineering, Medical, Teaching, Accounting and many others were living in the UK, and if we join hands, then Team Work will be more effective than individual effort.

May I render my most sincere thanks to those who assisted me at the outset, such as: Dr Marc Dissanayaka, Dr Keerthi Devendra, Mr Rohan de Alwis, Professor Dharmadasa and specially Mr Sarath Wijesinghe.

I wish and I am sure that APSL will get stronger and stronger year by year in order to provide more and more contributions and assistance to those who need it, in Sri Lanka and in any part of the world.

**Eng. Leslie Gunaratne**

### President (2007-2009)



I was one of the founding members of APSL and then became the 2nd President. I served a period of 2 years and since then have remained in the committee as co-opted member. It is a great privilege to be associated with such a great organisation which has gone from strength to strength.

I was a physician in Genitourinary Medicine and retired a few years ago. My precious time is spent travelling, gardening and playing golf. In addition, I am learning Spanish so that I can add a fourth language to my collection!

**Dr. Andrew Nayagm**

### President (2009-2011)



Beginning from a humble start in year 2004, I have experienced over the past 15 years, the growth of APSL to today's status. It has grown to a strong Association by gathering like-minded professionals from all sectors. As a charity organisation, the APSL is continuously thriving with the noble aim of helping our native country, Sri Lanka while improving our professional practice in the United Kingdom. I am inviting interested Sri Lankans to join this effort, and CONGRATULATE APSL for the success achieved to date. I send my best wishes for APSL to move forward going from strength to strength.

**Prof. I M Dharmadasa**



## President (2011-2013)



APSL has completed 15 years since it was established, a significant achievement for a voluntary organisation with a diverse membership. Congratulations to the past and present

Management of APSL for making it a real Sri Lankan organisation in the UK. Long may the unity of our diverse membership continue towards building a sustainable future!

**Rohan De Alwis**

## President (2013-2015)



I am pleased to send my felicitations as APSL celebrates its 15th Anniversary. I consider it a privilege to have been associated with the association and contribute to its success during its formative years. APSL shines as a symbol of unity

and professionalism among the Sri Lankan Diaspora in Britain. It continues to adapt and go from strength to strength thanks to its democratic principles and selfless dedication of key members. I wish APSL continued success in the years to come!

**Mervyn Silva**

## President (2015-2017)



It is a great pleasure to send this message on the occasion of the celebration of 15 years to APSL UK. Since its inception in 2004 everyone involved had been working hard with sheer dedication and motivation to bring the

association to the current level as a very credible professional organisation in the United Kingdom. It is now the time for the next generation of young Sri Lankan professionals to take the association to a higher level creating innovative ideas to serve the Sri Lankan community in the UK and community projects to help the needy in our mother country.

With best wishes,

**Leslie Dep**

## Immediate Past President



During my term as the President from 2017 to 2019, we experienced a significant growth and a step change in all our charitable projects. Some of the Key milestones during this time include the establishment of

the APSL cancer relief fund to support the needy cancer patients, significant increase in the number of APSL scholarship awards and the launch of 3rd Solar village project in "Puthyanagar" to support 70 families in Vanni District.

During the year 2018 we also announced a strategic partnership with the Foundation of Goodness (FoG) in Sri Lanka. APSL and FoG will support each other's charitable projects and fundraising ventures for the benefit of under-served communities in Sri Lanka.

The establishment of APSL- Florence De Silva Trust in May 2019 is undoubtedly the most significant milestone of APSL's long term desire to support educational needs and wellbeing of Children in Sri Lanka.

I wish APSL a very happy 15th anniversary and would like to thank all APSL members and their families for their continue.

**Suraj Wijendra**



## Solar Villages

The concept of Establishing 'Solar Villages' aiming to harness clean and affordable solar energy to drive economic progress, eradicate poverty and bring sustainable development in rural villages in Sri Lanka was established by Professor I M Dharmadasa.

In September 2008, a pilot project was launched in the Kaduruwewa village cluster

tree planting, organic farming, bee keeping, brick making, vegetable and fruit growing. This way, villagers were empowered to forge their self-development, village children benefitted from a positive learning atmosphere, and the whole village had a greener natural environment to live in.

In 2017, APSL in collaboration with Hela Sarana

UK jointly funded installation of a solar power generating system in the Village of Nochchiya in North West Sri Lanka. This project aligned well with the governments 'Surya Bala Sangramaya' programme. Pumping water for household use is powered by



near Anuradhapura. A solar powered water pumping system replaced a costly to operate diesel pump for providing clean water for drinking and household use. Guided by Prof Dharmadasa, the village committee used the resulting savings to make improvements to village school, library temple and roads. Villagers also participate in productive activities such as

electricity from the National Grid, significant income is generated from the solar power fed back to the National Grid via the Net Plus system. This helps to cover a large part of the electricity cost for pumping water. Moreover the cost savings are then allocated for improving the village infrastructure based on priorities identified by the Nochchiya



Village Development Committee. In 2019 the community has made an initiative to award 10 CARE (Centres for application of Renewable Energy Sources) scholarships to 10 needy children from their own community worth of Rs 1000 per month per student.

Establishing a Solar Village in the previously conflict affected areas in North East was one of the key projects initiated as part of APSL 'We Sri Lanka' initiative, led by Mr. Gihantha Jayasinghe. APSL with the help of FOG (Foundation of Goodness) has commissioned the third APSL Solar Powered Village Development project in Puthiya Nagar, Mullaitivu, Sri Lanka. Puthiya Nagar consists of around 80 families re-settled after the end of the conflict. A number of families in the village are headed by single parent women, or have disabled men and women to take care of.

APSL has fully financed the installation of a 6 kW solar roof on the Community Centre in Puthiya Nagar village which also houses a Library and the Pre-School. The Rs. 1.3 million cost of the project was met through the proceeds from the 2018 APSL Dinner Dance, individual donations, and corporate donations. Soon the village will be able to generate an alternative income stream from the Government's Net Plus system.

The income generated from the solar power system will be utilised for pumping and storing clean water for drinking, household use and agriculture, Water purification. English language learning and IT training for children and employment creation as an alternative to manual labour and cattle breeding in a phased approach.

## Scholarship Scheme

The Scholarship Scheme was launched in 2014 as part of APSL's 10th birthday celebrations, as a vehicle that would enable many people, both, members and non-members alike to support this vision aiming to provide financial assistance to gifted but underprivileged school children in Sri Lanka. The scheme is continuing to grow tremendously during past five years under the leadership and continuous commitment of Mr. Mervyn Silva and Prof Terrance Fernando.

Starting with five children at the launch, the scheme has

grown to support 75 children (45 female and 30 male) today in several districts in Sri Lanka. They hail from a number of different localities: Bandarawela, Chilaw, JaEla, Kaduruwewa, Kegalle, Matale, Moratuwa, Nainamadama,



Nochchiya, Puttalam and Katuwapitiya. At present, 6 children from Solar Villages from the North and North Central provinces and 6 children from Katuwapitiya where many lives lost in Easter Sunday attack receive the scholarship. The recipient children receive an initial bursary of Rs 5000.00 and thereafter Rs 3000.00 per month until they complete their G.C.E (Advanced Level) examination. APSL regularly monitor the academic performance of the children.

Having grown steadily over the past 5 years, the scholarship Scheme now has robust systems and processes in place capable of taking on and supporting an increasing number of children who could benefit from the support the scheme provides. There is further allocation for more scholarships from Scholarship funds and through The Florence De Silva Memorial fund

for children. Based on the increased number of scholarships, In May 2019, APSL signed an agreement with FOG to receive outsourced support for admin functions to manage the project from Sri Lanka.

We would like to say a big Thank You to all our sponsors for standing by us and supporting us over the past 5 years, which has made it possible for us to reach out and transform so many lives.

**It costs £20 per month to fund a child through education. You can donate any amount you wish as a one-off or regular donation as they will all go to benefit the needy children. If you would like to help please speak to a member of our Executive Committee or visit our website [www.apsl.org.uk](http://www.apsl.org.uk) for more information.**

## Cancer Relief Project

The APSL Cancer relief fund was launched at the Annual Dinner Dance 2017 and has made a tremendous progress over the recent past. We have raised over £ 4000 towards the fund through partnerships, proceeds from

events including the 2017 Dinner Dance, the gatherings organised by Sri Lankan Community in Cardiff and online donations via the dedicated Virgin Money Giving page. To date, £800 has been spent on providing

emergency medical supplies to numerous patients nominated by the Badulla General Hospital and another £ 400 for patients across the country including children. APSL's partnership with Marks and Spencer Sri Lanka led to a £700 renovation of the sanitary facilities at Badulla Cancer Ward.

APSL has recently formed a new collaboration with the Kurunegala General Hospital





via Wayamba Cancer Society, a charitable organisation based at the Hospital, to provide help to cancer patients within the region and across the country. Initially, APSL has agreed to provide financial help for number of patients at the Kurunegala cancer ward towards their daily expenses, transport costs, expenses for accompanying family member etc. APSL also will provide funds to carry out cancer awareness workshops/seminars within nearby regions to provide help to families and to increase awareness. We are currently having advanced discussions with Karapitiya General Hospital and with Batticaloa General Hospital to form similar agreements there by expanding

the footprint of APSL cancer relief beneficiaries.

In line with the Fund's ambition to provide patient support services, the cancer awareness leaflets produced by Dr. Uditha Jayatunga and Dr. Damayanthi Peiris are ready for printing and distribution.

**We thank everyone who made this work possible by their efforts and donations. If you would like to help us do more for cancer patients and their families in Sri Lanka please speak to a member of our Executive Committee or visit our website [www.apsl.org.uk](http://www.apsl.org.uk) for more information.**

## Mentoring Project

The Mentoring project was launched in early 2018. The project aims to provide mentoring support to APSL members and non-members, based in the UK and in Sri Lanka, to develop their professional careers.

One of our key aims, as an organization, is to develop the expertise and capability of Sri Lankan professionals and share skills as a way of supporting and encouraging people to manage their own career and learning in order to maximise their potential and build their skills. The scheme will offer benefits of expanding networking opportunities within APSL and beyond and provide insight into potential career opportunities.



APSL is actively looking for mentors and mentees to further develop this project. Webcollect data management platform has been configured to enable interested members to support this project. The project led by Mr. Tariq Salih and Dr. Mahesh De Silva.

**The details of the scheme can be found on our website [www.apsl.org.uk](http://www.apsl.org.uk)**

# Florence De Silva Memorial Trust for Children

In May 2019, APSL received a substantial donation in the UK from a Will. The donor, in her last Will left a portion of her net estate to charities to be used exclusively for the benefit of children in Sri Lanka, especially to feed, provide clothing and educational upliftment.

APSL is planning to use this donation as an endowment/capital investment fund in Sri Lanka to generate an annual income, which will be used to support children's projects on a long-term basis.

'Florence de Silva Memorial Trust for Children' provides support for children under four main project themes; APSL-Florence de Silva Scholarships, APSL Child Support Fund, APSL Student Essentials Project, APSL Educational Infrastructure Development Fund.

So far, we have initiated 10 APSL-Florence de Silva Scholarships for the students affected

by Easter Sunday attacks within the area of Katuwapitiya. At present, 6 students are receiving their scholarships. Further, in August



2019, young monks from Ambagapitiya Pirvena in Galle District received much needed Dhamma Books, other text books and educational materials. APSL also provided much needed printer and a laptop to support IT education in Mihiripenna Dhammarathana Maha Vidyalaya and school essentials to Pathiraja Vidyalaya in Galle District.



Two further projects have been approved under this fund in 2019; Donation to purchase furniture and white goods for a children's home in Rathupaswala, Weliweriya managed by Praddep Lakstha Foundation and Donation to purchase necessary equipment for Children's Intervention Centre in Anuradhapura.



## Living in the UK Series

The 'Living in the UK' seminar series launched in 2010, organizing discussion sessions, centred on Eastern and Western values and the day to day experiences Sri Lankans face living in the UK and how well we blend into the system especially being second generation Sri Lankans. The Project is managed by Vice President (Finance) of APSL Mr. Thushara Madurasinghe with the support of executive committee members of Mr Rohan De Alwis and Dr Dulini Fernando.

The events are mainly organised in various locations in the UK for the past 9 years, collaboration with Sri Lankan temples in the UK including Jethawana Buddhist Vihara in Birmingham, Redbridge Buddhist Vihara in Ilford and Kethumathi Buddhist Vihara in Manchester.

These events were well attended by Sunday school children, parents, APSL office bearers, well -wishers of the Sri Lankan community in the UK and Sri Lankan High Commission officials. Excellent presentation on 'Sri Lankan Cultural Values' and discussion on aspects of "why we live in the UK", "what we may be missing", the differences between Sri Lankan and UK cultures, differences between friends, family and office

friends, what are our obligations to society, what individuals can do to enjoy Sri Lankan culture in the UK, and what parents can do to introduce Sri Lankan culture to youngsters growing up in UK, have been well received by the attendees.



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## Young Professionals Event

The Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK (APSL) held its sixth Young Professionals Event (an initiative to promote knowledge transfer), at the Sri Lanka High Commission, London, on 13 June 2019, with the participation of Her Excellency Ms Manisha Gunasekara, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in the United Kingdom.

Four dynamic and talented speakers held the audience captive with their personal and professional experiences ranging from Technology Broad casting, Entrepreneurship/ Technology Start-up Business, Career Development and Mentoring.

Dr. Shini Somara Science/Technology TV Reporter translates cutting-edge science into warm-hearted and engaging television on a variety of television networks including BBC World News, BBC America, Sky and Discovery and PBS Digital Studios. She discussed key issues in clarifying the secrets behind pioneering technology and innovation.

Dr. Lakamal Jayasinghe Director of Nanopore Research at Oxford, a scientist whose invention led to hand-held DNA analysers and a multi-billion-pound technology business. He presented the technology is being used in more than 80 countries for a range of biological research applications worldwide.

Dr. Dulini Fernando, an Associate Professor at the Warwick Business School,

University of Warwick, discussed some key challenges encountered by professionals in the British workplace. She focussed on career development, talent management and retention of highly skilled workers and her work on Institute of policy Studies (IPS) and leading private sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

Tariq Salih HR Business Partner Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) focussed on the importance of mentoring programmes through his experience in the NHS and Civil Service.

It was a rare opportunity to listen to a wonderful line up of young professionals from different fields and was great to see the achievements of these young Sri Lankans who make a significant contribution to UK as well as Sri Lanka.

The event was attended by a large number of young professionals, APSL members, their friends and family and their questions gave rise to stimulating conversation during the panel discussion that followed the talks. It provided a great opportunity to meet positive and like-minded professionals, network and find out what APSL are doing in the UK and Sri Lanka and support their charitable activities.







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