

ALLIANCE NEWS

2021 | ISSUE 04



In December, the NCEASL initiated the 'Bearing Gifts' project, which involved providing specialized gift packs to over 800 families of pastors and ministry workers across the island. These men and women of God faced significant challenges and disappointments during the past few years, especially during the pandemic. Through this initiative, the NCEASL presented them with a token of appreciation for the immense and tireless work they had carried out for the kingdom of God. Further, the NCEASL encouraged and strengthened them to keep fighting the good fight whilst reassuring them that we would always be there to support them.

The gift packs included dry rations, sanitary items, school stationery, footwear vouchers, toys for the children and confectioneries.



Bearing Gifts

This project also involved youth volunteers who helped pack the gifts. Many of them were blessed to be a part of such an initiative. Many of the beneficiaries had never received a gift of this nature in their life, and they expressed their deep gratitude.

"A big thank you to the NCEASL for all the work that you do. This Christmas, your act of love and kindness truly blessed us. This gift is not just a means of provision but has shown us the love of God. I pray that God will bless all those that have contributed to this great initiative."

~Pastor Devsri

"I really thank God for the NCEASL who has come through in this time of great economic difficulty and blessed us with such an amazing gift. This gift was an enormous blessing not just for my family and me but to all the pastors and ministry workers in our district. We are amazed at the number of goods and the quality of the items that have been given to us. I pray for the growth of the NCEASL in this next season and that their impact will be mighty in this nation."

~ Pastor John

"I convey my gratitude and greetings to the directors and members of the staff of the NCEASL. Every member of my family received a gift from you. Due to the difficult times, we required many food items, and my wife was thrilled to receive milk powder, among other groceries, in the gift pack. My daughter had been praying for a 'snakes and ladders' game board, and my son longed to have a remote-controlled car. Both these toys were among the gifts my children received. We are so grateful and thank God for the provisions we received through the NCEASL."

~Pastor John



INTRODUCING OUR SPEAKERS FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE



School of Holistic Discipleship Training



Godfrey Yogarajah
General Secretary, NCEASL

**An introduction to the Disciple
a Nation framework**



Mahesh De Mel
Associate Secretary General, NCEASL

**Missions and Evangelism in the time
of social, economic, and political turmoil**



Yamini Ravindran
Associate Secretary General, NCEASL

**The Sri Lankan church as a
catalyst for justice and peace**



Join us at **6.00 pm** on the **17th of November**,
via zoom, as we discuss the role of the church
in discipling the nation, **with simultaneous
translation in Sinhala and Tamil**

The Launch of the SHDT

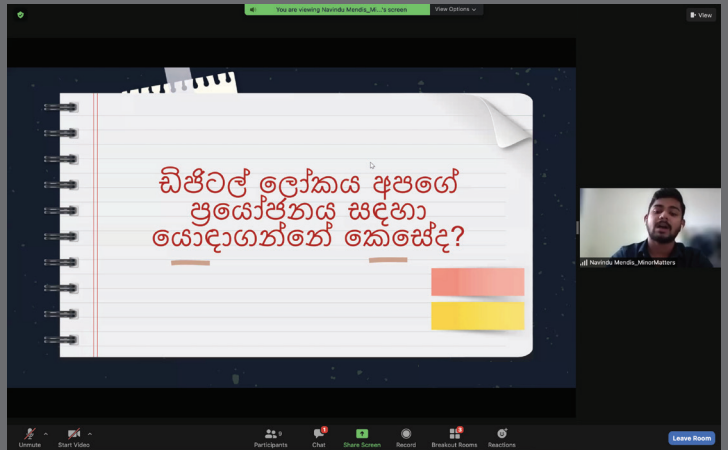
The Youth Evangelical Alliance (YEA) launched the School of Holistic Discipleship Training (SHDT) on the 17th of November. The SHDT aims to equip church leaders - including both women and young people - amidst all challenges, to make disciples of all nations, beginning from our nation, Sri Lanka. To this end, the curriculum developed by the NCEASL which has engaged in holistic ministry for the past 70 years, is based on the Discipled Nation framework.

The launch saw the participation of 30 churches and over 75 participants. At the launch, Mr. Godfrey Yogarajah spoke on 'The role of the Church in transforming the nation', Mr. Mahesh De Mel addressed the topic on 'Missions and Evangelism in the time of social, economic, and political turmoil', and Ms. Yamini Ravindran discussed 'The Sri Lankan church as a catalyst for justice and peace'.

The SHDT offers a 12-week practical ministry e-Course comprising specific training on the indicators and how they can be used to make a lasting impact in their communities. Whilst the course will be offered in all three languages, following the course, the SHDT will also support churches to implement ministry interventions in their communities.

RLC Training on Digital Citizenship

The Religious Liberty and Social Justice Commission (RLC) conducted several training courses on Digital Citizenship from October to December. On the 15th and 22nd of October, a preliminary training on Digital Citizenship was conducted via Zoom for students from S. Thomas' College. The trainings, presented in English, Sinhala and Tamil were conducted in two batches for grades 6-8 and grades 9-11. The topics covered hate speech, fake news, and how students can play a role in countering them. Over 164 students attended and engaged during the session.



e-Learning Courses

The RLC e-Learning platform launched its new e-Course on Digital Citizenship in Sinhala. This course, which is mainly targeted towards youth, provided an outcome on social platforms and the way for their effective use for the well being of the society. The course is taught by Thanuja Jayawardana and Narada Bakmeewewa, with Dr Kaushalya Ariyaratne as the content curator. This course involves 07 modules including assignments and fun quizzes.



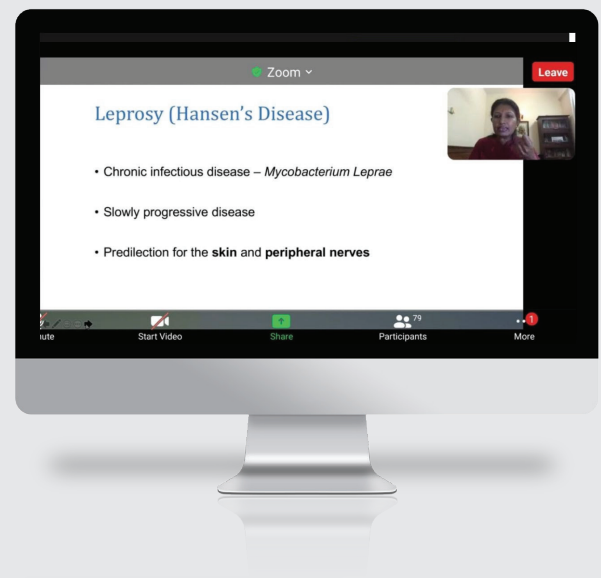
Missions Training

The Missions Commission conducted a 03-day training from the 26th to the 28th of October for twenty-two staff from the Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Lanka. The training was based on spiritual building, capacity building and training in righteousness.

Interfaith Approach to Zero Leprosy in Districts

During the lockdown period due to COVID-19, the close physical conditions prevalent in households with poor living conditions have increased the risk of the spread of skin-related diseases. Statistics reveal that close to 2000 cases of leprosy were reported in 2020 in Sri Lanka, and 04 people are infected daily.

The Alliance Development Trust's (ADT) Health Sector implemented three leprosy awareness programmes via Zoom for participants from Colombo, Galle and Matara. As an interfaith approach of zero leprosy in districts, the district leprosy Public Health Inspector (PHI) conducted an online awareness programme. Interfaith leaders including 145 from the Hindu faith, 41 Christians and 41 persons from other faith groups participated in this programme.



Salt and Light

More than 55 children of members from the Ceylon Evangelical Alliance (CEA) attended a special programme organised by the Missions Commission on the 18th of October. The programme discussed being the 'salt and light' amidst the pandemic.



The Missions 'Partnerships' Training Programme

The Missions Commission hosted a series of special training programmes for the pastors of the Warakapola Pastors' Fellowship. The topic was on 'Partnerships in Ministry' and how each minister should excel in forming partnerships at all levels of communities.

There was a participation of 18 pastors and it was conducted on the 06th, 13th and 20th of September. The Missions Commission plans to extend this training programme with the other pastors' fellowships as well.



COOKED MEALS FOR 20,000+ PEOPLE

It was very disheartening to see how many people, especially urban city dwellers, struggled to sustain themselves during the pandemic. The economic downturn greatly challenged and impacted their daily livelihoods, as they strived to feed their families. In an effort to reach out to those affected by the pandemic, the Sanctuary House (SH) team initiated 'Meals for the Needy', a ministry that initially planned to serve 200 cooked meals over the weekends. During the first weekend of the 25th and 26th of September, due to an overwhelming response and enthusiasm by individual donors, including the NCEASL staff, the SH team launched the 'Meals for the Needy' initiative by distributing 402 meals. By mid-November, the initiative had gained momentum and the SH had distributed 5,002 cooked meals to urban disadvantaged city dwellers.

This was mainly possible as the SH worked in partnership with community leaders that identified those in need and vulnerable communities affected by the current crisis. Amongst those identified were those recovering from COVID-19 and in quarantine, daily wage earners who had lost their livelihoods and income, the elderly, widows, single-parent households and children, including some with learning disabilities.

From the 26th of November till the 09th of December, the ADT partnered with SYSCO Labs and distributed 14,367 lunch packets to disadvantaged urban communities in Colombo through its 'Share a Meal, Share a Moment' project. Sysco's objective was to fulfil an essential current need in the community; provide safely prepared warm meals to

families in needy communities during the festive season.

The meals provided were wholesome, warm cooked meals prepared in clean kitchens at the SH, Curries Kitchen and the Curry Pot restaurant, following health and safety guidelines. Each day the ADT distributed 1000 cooked lunch packets to vulnerable communities in Wellampitiya, Mattakkuliya, Wattala, Kandana, Madampitiya, Rajagiriya, Ethul Kotte, Dematagoda and Kolonnawa areas. The Grama Sevakas with whom the ADT coordinated this project were greatly touched by this initiative as they expressed their gratitude to the ADT.

"I want to thank those who came forward to help this community. At these times a nutritious meal like this really helps the families as they are suffering from the cost of living. My plea is, please continue to do these kind deeds more often. Thank you." ~ Grama Sevaka, Mattakkuliya.

"Everything is expensive these days and the daily wage earners are suffering. Providing a meal like this goes a long way. So thank you for your efforts." ~ Grama Sevaka, Ethul Kotte.

The recipients cherished the meals. As many families could not buy anything special for their children due to the high cost of living and reduction in their daily incomes, the special meals for the kids were indeed a treat. The warm and nourishing meals that were distributed made a big difference as many families lived on only one or two meals per day. When the ADT reached out to them, they saw the appreciation in their eyes, especially the little children. Through the distribution of cooked meals, the ADT and the SH made a significant difference in the lives of **20,019** people during this period.

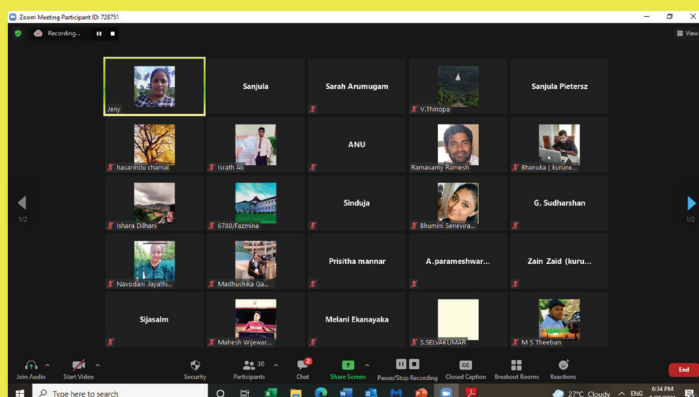
On the 23rd of December, members from the Kingdom of God Church hired a truck and took the gospel to the slums of Mattakkuliya. As they sang carols, a crowd gathered, and they shared the gospel and distributed tracts. They distributed 800 tracts and visited many houses to share the love of Christ. The pastor estimates that over 400 people heard the gospel message through this event.



The BDU Supports Self-Employment

The Business Development Unit (BDU) distributed 05 incubators to women in Mullaitivu and a widow in Jaffna. Further, vegetable seeds were distributed amongst 10 women in Trincomalee under the home gardening project.

Research study practical session



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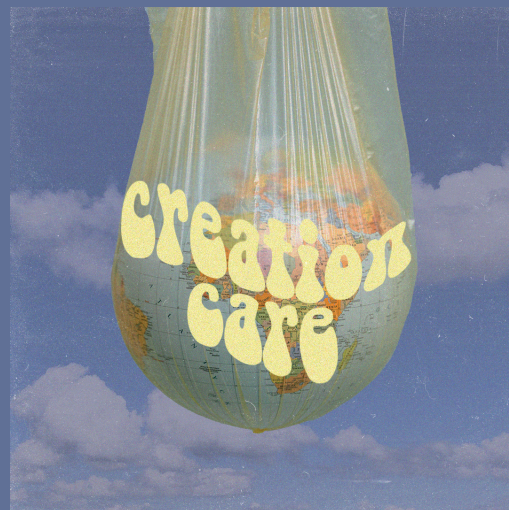
RLC Research Study

Fellowship trainees from Kegalle submitted a project proposal on research that will study youth's knowledge of democracy and democratic institutions. The orientation of the research study was conducted with the participation of the core group. Some trainees from Kandy, Kalutara, Anuradhapura, Monaragala and Ratnapura were also joined as the core group of the study. The practical session of the research study held virtually via Zoom was held with the participation of fellowship trainees from 12 districts. The orientation and sessions were conducted by Dr R. Ramesh from the University of Peradeniya.

Social Media Initiatives



The ADT shared a post on the 01st of October in commemoration of Children's Day.



The YEA's post on Instagram talks about environmental care, encouraging young Christians to question their role in taking care of our environment and how the Church can contribute towards this effort.



Paankade ran a series of posts for Children's Day, discussing a few lesser talked about areas of children's lives; such as their mental health, and the real state of education amidst the pandemic.

The RLC carried out a social media campaign on Human Rights Day, which is observed every year on the 10th of December.

INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
2021

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The RLC initiated a project to equip and mobilise social media influencers to promote positive speech online concerning religious freedom. Influencers across various social media platforms were identified, recruited, and tasked with designing creative campaigns to raise awareness of and counter hate speech and disinformation whilst promoting religious harmony. This one of a kind initiative reached over 716,000 individuals through the creative campaigns carried out by the influencers. Certain videos have been recognised by the representatives from the Police Children & Women Bureau, the Director of SLCERT (Sri Lanka's cyber readiness team working alongside the CID to curb cybercrimes) and the Group Director of The Capital Maharaja Group.





**NATIONAL CHRISTIAN
EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE SRI LANKA**

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