

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020  
2021

(SRI) LANKA DEVELOPMENT JOURNALIST FORUM





(Sri) Lanka Development  
Journalist Forum





## A MESSAGE FROM THE **PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Dear friend,

I could not be more excited to share the 2020/21 (Sri) Lanka Development Journalist Forum's (LDJF) Annual report with you. What a year it was. A devastating pandemic rocked the globe and Sri Lanka as well. Our nation faced a **long-overdue reckoning with three decades of civil war, racism and attacks against democratic values**. The stripping impacts of systemic inequity—on our economy, public health, schools, and other social infrastructures—did not only expose the unfinished business of our organizations. It energized you, me, and millions across the country to reimagine these systems and demand bold change for a sustainable development.

So, we at LDJF did what we do best: rolled up our sleeves and got to work, more inspired than ever to advance the rights and well-being of our country's most vulnerable communities with a powerful tool to voice their unheard voices. I'm so proud of what LDJF achieved last year—and we have so much left to do to achieve more.

In a time of crisis, I'm inspired by LDJF's vision for a future where we ALL can thrive—where voice of vulnerable community including women, girls, and people of all genders are supported throughout their lives with new media tools to echo their aspiration, needs, problems to the country with their own words. Yes, LDJF launched its first ever initiative "MediaCorps Watch" news magazine program to report the truth and under privilege community issues through trained mobile journalists throughout the country. Our pioneer initiative trained over 100 mobile journalists and produced more than 300 -400 mobile stories through 50 news magazine programs in both Sinhala and Tamil languages covering North, East, West and South of Sri Lanka where mainstream media failed to cover the stories at the rural level. We have reached 5 million audiences through various social media and online channels within a short span.

And I am proudly announced that LDJF has completed its one and half year tireless consultations with media owners, journalists, regional media houses, media critics, academia, researchers and civil society organizations to produce Media Gender Charter for Sri Lanka Media and finally launched and made it available in the public domain.

I take this opportunity to thank our Board of Directors for their contributions and thank everyone, most importantly our donors, who trusted on us to march forward with our mission and vision.

Azad Mustaffa LL.B.  
Program Director



## SDJF VISION

A civil society where there is no voice poverty.



## SDJF MISSION

Advocate for democratic and pluralistic values, strengthen community media, and amplify the voice of the excluded, based on development communication principles.



## INTRODUCTION

The year 2020/21 had been a challenging year for Lanka Development Journalist Forum (LDJF). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many trainings and workshops that had been planned to be held physically had to be conducted online or in hybrid-mode. The Media Empowerment for a Democratic Sri Lanka (MEND) program, Women Lead project and Incubator Spaces for Promoting Information Rights and Freedom of Expression (InSPIRE) project were the main programs that LDJF implemented during 2020/21.



SDJF | ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

**PIONEERING MOBILE BASED  
NEWS MAGAZINE PROGRAM  
IN SRI LANKA**





LDJF continued its implementation of the MEND program. This year was the final year of the project, most of our interventions and strategies were focused on sustaining the MediaCorps, Vibrant Voices and Media Gender Charter. The pandemic paralysed the functions of the Island but our project team along with our beneficiaries formulated a strategy to give voice for marginalized communities during the pandemic and counter misinformation about the pandemic.

As a result, LDJF designed its first ever 100 % mobile phone news magazine program called MediaCorps Watch (MC Watch), right after 2 days of the Island wide lock down.

With the huge challenges during the production of news magazines under the pandemic, LDJF telecasted more than 138 episodes of weekly news magazines in both Tamil and Sinhala with the contributions from more than 59 Mojo reporters across the country. The reporters produced more than 400 stories of marginalized communities focusing on issues of poverty, covid related issues, electoral issues, socio-economic and political marginalization, etc. The program was disseminated through a national television called UTV and through Facebook and other social media channels. The program reached more than 2 million viewers within a short span.

LDJF started the MC Watch program to tap the resourceful network of young journalists from all over the country to report human-interest stories related to the pandemic which are not highlighted in the mainstream media. This innovative approach offered the MediaCorps Fellows an opportunity to make use of and practice the Mojo skills they had learnt. It also provided them an opportunity to earn an extra income, especially during a financially difficult period.

There is also policy level impact that had created many strides in the regional journalism efforts as the program promoted policy level changes in the electoral identity for LGBT+ community. Similarly, there are many stories that have been reported by the magazine creating changes in the policy level, individual level and regional levels on the marginalized communities.

Great strides of impact created by the MC Watch Program through some of the stories they reported:

The program bridged the marginalized community with helping hands.

[A woman in Puttlam received international orders for her traditional mats; An innocent child from Monaragala with hearing impairment received an equipment worth LKR 375,000 to hear the world once again; A destitute family from Sooriyawewa received temporary shelter and eventually a piece of land to construct their own house with the support from villagers and authorities.](#)





SDJF | ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

**WHEN WOMEN LEAD ALL ELSE IS SECONDARY  
NORTHERN WOMEN LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS  
FAMILIARIZE WITH MEDIA ECOSYSTEM TO  
INCREASE THEIR MEDIA PRESENCE**



**“Women Lead”** is a project implemented by LDJF, funded by Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust (NTT), Sri Lanka. The objective of the program is to improve critical communication and basic media skills of Women representatives of the local government in the Northern province of Sri Lanka. The selected 20 women local council members were given training on critical thinking and media landscape and have been given the opportunity to learn public speaking skills. They also experienced the function of media outlets through the media tour and had an opportunity to interact with media experts.

**This project transformed the ability of 20 women in local government to speak and participate in media, creatively express themselves knowing the manipulative power of media.** Most importantly, those women became highly capable of fearlessly expressing their opinions, alternative ideas in the public sphere, especially regarding issues affecting fundamental rights of the people.

**These Women Local Government Members (WLGMs) were able to organize maiden press conferences across five districts** and gave professional media interviews to journalists on the various issues in their constituencies, solutions they have brought forth to solve these issues, featured their continuous local government work and their political will for the future.

**The testimonies of the WLGMs reflected how they have developed as media sensitive local government members.** The confidence of WLGMs have increased significantly as they can creatively and wisely use media to discuss issues and present solutions to problems in their constituencies and smartly attract traditional and new media to tell their stories, even though they are women.

**These women are now confident in using not only traditional media but also social (new) media,** as they are equipped with techniques and ways to deal with online misogyny and gender-based cyber violence. They are not afraid anymore to be vocal in the new media as they have mastered the art of managing their social media even in the face of adversity. They are determined not only by will but by developed skills, ability, knowledge and capacity to engage media in their day-to-day local government work and further their political goals and their socio-economic development work.

***“We thought media is something unapproachable and it is men who are predominantly privileged by it. We were made to believe that it was not easy to bring out the grievances of the people through media. However, given the training, we are confident that we can successfully face the media, deal with any difficult journalist, organize press conferences, and be part of any media discussion or debate.”***

**Dayanandan Jayachitra**  
**member of the Poonangari Pradeshiya Sabha**

***“During the three years of a political career we have never participated in any media programs. Instead, we occasionally used Facebook. We have now realized that we should work with the media, use it effectively in advancing our political goals.”***

**Mallika Balachandran**  
**Council Member – LGB Jaffna**

Meet



InSPIRE

CONGRATULATIONS!

"Peek through the darkness,  
let the hope of freedom be ignited"

the



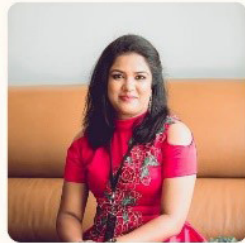
Chamoda

TEAM  
FIRE



Savindi

Winners



Aditya



Ishara



Thamodi

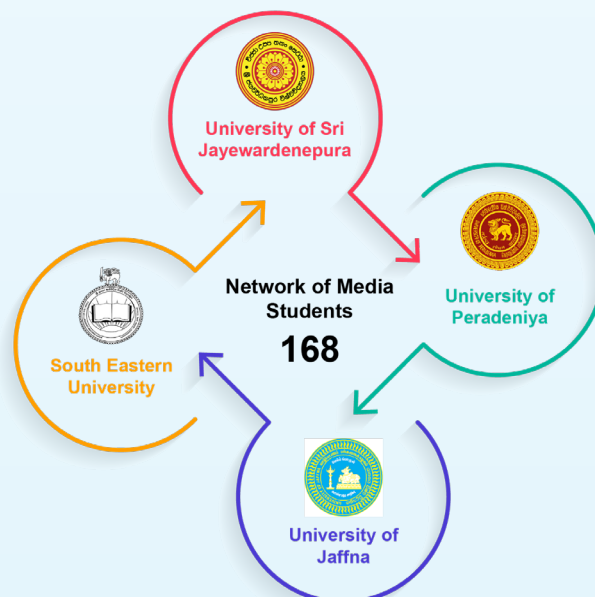
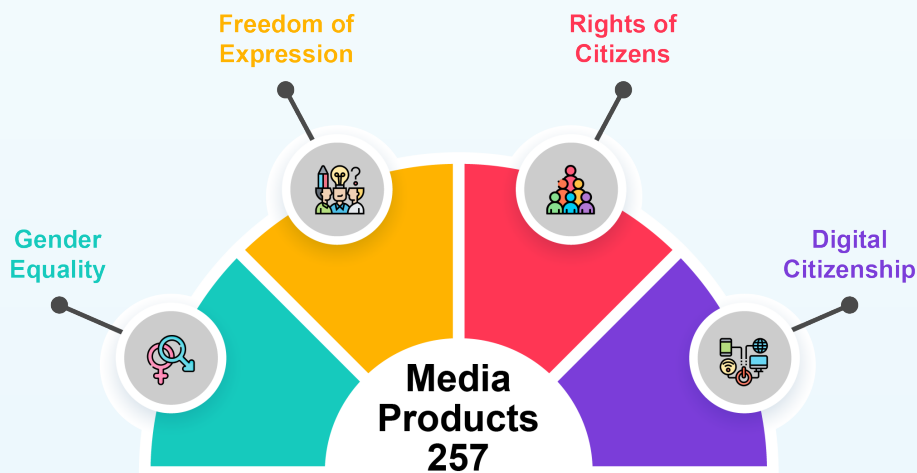
SDJF | ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

**NEW MEDIA PROMOTES CREATIVE  
EXPRESSION AND INFORMATION RIGHTS**

LDJF joined hands with Helvetas to create responsible media citizens in the midst of fake news culture in the new media in Sri Lanka. The project InSPIRE (Incubator Spaces Promoting Information Rights and Freedom of Expression) moved as a tortoise in the year 1 due to the pandemic. However, LDJF redesigned its approach to transform project activities virtually. The project orientation, an online competition under the theme “I Am A Responsible Media Citizen” and the development of modules after a gap analysis for future module based training on Digital Citizenship, Information Rights, Freedom of Expression and Gender in New Media to the academia, students and focal points of the project were conducted.

LDJF formed a network of 168 media students from 4 state universities and produced a variety of media products, 257, that promote gender equality, rights of citizens, digital citizenship, civic activism and freedom of expression during the orientation and the online competition.

The winners were selected from the individual and group categories of the InSPIRE online competition “I Am a Responsible Media Citizen”. The emerging talents were recognized from their creative work at the contest. The competition entries reflected the talent, creativity and sensitivity of these young minds in creating socially responsible media products. [Seelan Lakshy](#), [Eshana Sadun](#), [Saranga Konara](#), [Dilanka Lakmal](#), [Ratnajothy Gowry](#), [Vidheesha Abeysinghe](#), and [Sachini Dilkushi](#) won and got the honorary mentions from the individual competitions in the four universities.



## DONORS



## PARTNERS



# FINANCIAL REPORT

*O.J. David & Co.*  
Chartered Accountants

LANKA DEVELOPMENT JOURNALIST FORUM

NO.3/8, SWARNA PLACE, NAWALA ROAD, RAJAGIRIYA

**STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021**

(All Amount In Sri Lankan Rupees )

	NOTES	2020/2021	2019/2020
<b>INCOME</b>			
Funds Received	04	49,385,949.00	43,051,142.00
<b>Less:- EXPENDITURE</b>			
Project Expenses	05	29,242,535.00	20,546,661.74
Adminstration Expenses	06	8,947,602.52	4,253,809.70
Personal Expenses	07	14,147,414.45	13,840,571.20
Finance & Other Expenses	08	24,812.81	14,750.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>52,362,364.78</b>	<b>38,655,792.64</b>
<b>Net Surplus /( Deficit ) before Taxation</b>		<b>(2,976,415.78)</b>	<b>4,395,349.36</b>
Less : Provision for Taxation		355,529.87	309,968.22
<b>Net Surplus /( Deficit ) After Taxation</b>		<b>(3,331,945.65)</b>	<b>4,085,381.14</b>





## Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum

No.3/8, Swarna Place, Nawala Road, Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka.

011 280 62 65 | [info@Ldjf.org](mailto:info@Ldjf.org) | [www.Ldjf.org](http://www.Ldjf.org)



/sdjf



@sdjf



/sdjf



sdjf\_lk