

Building skills in investigative journalism and reporting in Sri Lanka

30-31 May 2016, Colombo, Sri Lanka

By Chinthaka Pathirana, provincial journalist and undergraduate student of the Open University of Sri Lanka



The Coalition of Education Development, Sri Lanka (CED Sri Lanka) conducted a media training workshop for youth and women from 20 remote districts in the island.

When compared to other countries in the region, Sri Lanka is a good performer in education. It registers higher literacy rates, high participation rates in primary education, and gender parities in enrolments even in higher education. However, these are national averages – which mask serious provincial disparities in the education system. Although mainstream media pays attention to national issues related to education, provincial issues and the situation especially pertaining to marginalised communities do not get adequately reported. Further, opportunities for training in journalism and

reporting are limited in Sri Lanka. These all impact on the discussions on education in the media, the level of debate and the quality of reportage.

In order to address this issue, the Coalition of Education Development, Sri Lanka (CED Sri Lanka) conducted a media training workshop for youth and women from 20 remote districts in the island. The main objectives of the training were to –

- Train a group of select youth and women to identify issues related to education in the districts
- Involve them in exploring education issues and analysing reporting in mass and social media
- Utilise skills gained in the training to contribute to CED's newsletter, VOICE
- Link with professional journalists and garner their support for advocacy and lobbying to achieve the SDG 4 targets



The media training aimed to, amongst other things, train select youth and women to identify issues related to education in the districts and link with professional journalists and garner their support for advocacy and lobbying to achieve the SDG 4 targets.

The training workshop was facilitated by eminent journalists and trainers – Dilrukshi Handuneththi and Ananda Jayasekara. ASPBAE's Cecilia Soriano also presented at the workshop and emphasized the role of the media in education advocacy. The participants took part in an exercise to analyse the news and feature stories in the print and electronic media and identify issues that that media does not focus on adequately.

Furthermore, the participants were trained on investigative journalism, interviewing, information gathering, validation, and effective reporting skills.

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Participants included provincial journalists and reporters, women community leaders, teachers, representatives of community-based organisations, and students from various socio-ethnic groups in Sri Lanka.

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