

- Future Leaders Conference
- Journey to Jaffna
- Feature Article: The Role of Sri Lanka Unites in my life
- SLU on the web

Sri Lanka Unites

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Sri Lanka Unites; A Youth Movement for Hope and Reconciliation

Emerging out of decades of great adversity, and a culture of suspicion and divisiveness, the end of the war finally marks a window of opportunity for us to rebuild as one nation. Yet, we are still faced with a common threat - an inability to find a sustainable peace. We are standing on the cusp of a new era, where an all too familiar polarized society could be replaced with one

that is determined to correct the wrongs of the previous generation; a society that comes together in the spirit of reconciliation.

As such, the defining question of today is, "how will the youth engage in reshaping the next decades and give leadership to positive changes that must take place?"

Sri Lanka Unites aims to do just that.



Our Vision

"To unite the youth of all ethnic and religious groups across Sri Lanka, in a movement which provides hope and promotes reconciliation, creating a peaceful and prosperous nation for future generations"





Future Leaders Conference 3: Sports Time

The need for youth led conflict transformation and nation building in post war Sri Lanka will be the inherent theme that will pervade the conference, which will be conducted in a multitude of mediums including speeches, testimonies, music, drama, media, art, skits, sports and team building skills.

Future Leaders Conference (FLC)

The Future Leaders Conference (FLC) is the key annual event of the Sri Lanka Unites (SLU) movement. In its fourth year, FLC Season 4 will bring together 500 youth leaders between the ages of 15 to 18 from 75 schools across Sri Lanka. They-

will be mentored by 100 local and international university student volunteers and will also be joined by 75 teachers.

Student leaders, local volunteers and teachers will be awarded full scholarships to attend this four day residen-

tial conference. During the conference participants will be exposed to important leadership principles that will serve them well in the years to come.

Journey to Jaffna

This year the conference will be held at Jaffna College, in Vaddukoddai in the Jaffna peninsula. This is indeed an historic event, as students from all 25 districts of the country gather at Jaffna and experience the culture and hospi-

tality of their compatriots of the North. Organizing an event of this nature at Jaffna is a mammoth task, and this task has been cheerfully taken on by the Sri Lanka Unites team, who have started on preparations to

make this year's conference one that would leave a lasting impression on the minds of the participants, and instill in them the passion to achieve a truly reconciled Sri Lankan society.



Our Mission

“To be a symbol for, and an example of, the powerful potential of united Sri Lankans to work towards sustainable development, peace and prosperity”

The Role of Sri Lanka Unites in My Life

By Elijah Hoole

Sri Lanka Unites has added meaning to my life by inspiring me to work courageously in the present and also hope for the future.

The more I got involved, the more I became aware that reconciliation is indeed possible and Sri Lanka does have a future to hope for. The more I became involved the more I was aware of the role I can play with my capabilities in making reconciliation a possibility. The more I got involved the more I was able to discover my potential and also my weaknesses.

This April our school's Sri Lanka Unites Club organized a three -day residential conference for 40 potential student leaders drawn from around Mannar. The conference helped us to raise awareness on wide ranging topics. Significantly it enabled us to take the message of reconciliation to the grass-roots level. With perseverance we managed to convince the Danish Refugee Council to fund us. We also managed to rope in several key figures in Mannar to speak on topics like Leadership, Self management, Sexuality, Child Rights, Importance of Documentation etc. The whole exercise demanded a lot patience and hard work. The days that preceding the conference was a learning curve to all of the team. The most valuable lesson of all was the value of **commitment**.

The last day's theme was peace and reconciliation. We contacted Prashan De Visser, President -Sri Lanka Unites (Prashan Anna) and asked him whether he could help us out with the last day's sessions. Despite his incredibly busy schedule he agreed without any reluctance he agreed to come. Commitment. A wrong turn at the Dambulla Junction by the driver with Prashan Anna asleep at the back took him and the two others to Valaichenai, even after that they drove back and made it for the noon session. Commitment. With nobody to run the morning session, we called Christyraja Kirubakaran, Assist- Vice President at the time, now the National Director (Christy anna), who was at that time doing his Sarvodaya work. He dropped everything and immediately arrived (he lived and worked in Mannar). Commitment. Together Prashan & Christy Anna made the final day the best. The commitment they exhibited made all our efforts pale in comparison.

Because of Sri Lanka Unites I've learned to see not the differences but the similarities between me and a fellow citizen from a different ethnic background. The time I spent with the Sinhalese taught me that except the language and religion the Tamils and the Sinhalese have almost everything in common. The same type of interests, likes and dislikes. The more I became aware of this the more the fact that Sri Lanka is a divide nation became a mystery to me.

So why are we divided? What is that mysterious factor that is keeping us away?

To be honest I do not have exact answers to these questions. But I seriously intend to find them. This is the search for truth that Sri Lanka Unites has catalyzed within me. Sri Lanka Unites has indeed started the Truth and Reconciliation process within me. But the beauty is there are thousands of other students all over the country who are trying with courage to find answers to similar questions. The beauty is there are thousands of other young boys and girls who have hope for a brighter future. The beauty is every one of them is working in their own unique ways to make that Future a possibility. All because of Sri Lanka Unites.



Join the Movement for **Hope and Reconciliation**

Follow us on our journey to the

Future Leaders Conference Season 4

Interested in becoming a **volunteer?**

Volunteers at the conference will be responsible for leading teams of 30 students along with two other co-team leaders. You will be expected to motivate your team, discuss reconciliation issues with them and encourage them to build strong bonds with each other. Volunteer training will be provided prior to the conference. Don't miss out on this opportunity to make an impact on Sri Lanka! Email admin@srilankaunites.org for more information.

Interested in **donating?**

The cost of sponsoring one student is Rs. 10,000 which covers their accommodations and food for 5 days, a conference booklet, a comprehensive post-conference guidebook, a t-shirt and post conference follow up expense. The investment of being an official partner for the conference is Rs. 500,000. For more information contact Christin Rajah at christen@srilankaunite.org or 0770 686 877 or Mohamed Rimaz on 071 764 667.



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