

CSR Sri Lanka teams up with top UK forums to propel Transformative CSR

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CSR Sri Lanka in partnership with the University of Sussex UK and the University of Durham UK, recently held a series of workshops on 'Transformative Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)' for stakeholders.

The participants were drawn from the banking, construction, hospitality, apparel and the agricultural sectors in the country.

The funding partners of the workshop were Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for International Development Project, financed by the Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation.

The five workshops organized for five different industry sectors, were participated by nearly 50 representatives from those sectors. These workshops were designed to be interactive and participant-focused. They enabled a platform for sharing of ideas and developing individual approaches. They also drew real-world examples and practical actions.

The aims of these interactive sessions included enhancing knowledge of transformative CSR and its relevance for participating sector organizations, defining the role as a sustainability ambassador and identifying key competences, developing strategies for respective organizations using best examples from around the world and devising an action plan for immediate implementation. These aims, as the Chairman, CSR Sri Lanka, Chandula Abeywickrema explains, are aligned with the key characteristics of CSR which encompass economic development, good governance, stakeholder responsiveness and environmental improvement.

The five workshops which were conducted on five different days, were facilitated by Dr. Tom Widger, an experienced consultant in CSR related policies and programmes whose expertise is sought by several global corporates. Trained at the London School of Economics, Dr. Widger has published numerous research publications on Sri Lankan CSR and related aspects of social development and public health.

He is also the co-founder/Director of Clarity Institute, a consultancy firm specialising in CSR interventions in developing and marginalized economics, communities and societies.

The main objective of this initiative as the CSR Sri Lanka, Chief explains, is to mould 'change leaders' who could facilitate the best practices of 'transformative CSR in their respective organizations.

"The five key industrial sectors selected as beneficiaries of these workshops, play very decisive roles in shaping the economy of the country and the workshops which were facilitated by an expert of international repute, sought to enlighten the CSR Heads of those selected sectors on how to adopt CSR as a practical and a deliverable tool in day-to-day operations of their respective organizations."

CSR Sri Lanka is an initiative piloted and managed collectively by a group of private sector companies here, with the aim of providing strategic guidance and necessary resources to bridge the gap between ad hoc CSR projects and creating sustainable value.

It is an independent organization represented entirely by private sector companies and SMEs and is the first of its kind in the country.

It seeks to engage the wider corporate community in addressing national priorities using the strengths of the member companies to work on specific initiatives.