



Press Release

SACTD and Fulbright Sri Lanka Co-Host a Two-Day Workshop to Enhance Teaching Strategies and Cross-Cultural Communication for Generation Z

SACTD-UNESCO C2C, Meepe, Sri Lanka.

The South Asian Centre for Teacher Development (SACTD), UNESCO Category 2 Centre in Education, Meepe-Sri Lanka recently held a two-day workshop titled "Unlocking Potential: Empowering Teachers through Language and Culture." This event marked an initial step in the partnership with the US-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission (Fulbright Sri Lanka).

Mr. Kamal Pathmasiri, the Director General of the SACTD-UNESCO C2C welcomed the resource Person- Fulbright Fellow, Ms. Monica Zhung, and the over 40 teachers and educators participating at the workshop, representing the public sector, private international schools in Sri Lanka, and the Cultural Center of Maldives in Sri Lanka. He also briefed on the SACTD's progress and the upcoming activities aimed at building capacities of teacher educators in the South Asian Region, as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre (C2C).

The workshop conducted by Monica Zhung was moderated and supported by Dr. Jayantha Wattavidanage, the Deputy Director General-Academic Affairs of SACTD. The Workshop primarily was aimed to empower educators by equipping them with interactive strategies, specifically designed for engaging Generation Z language learners. Participants had exposure to various strategies to foster collaboration, communication, and critical thinking within their classrooms. It also provided them a solid opportunity for developing cross-cultural competence by gaining insights into diverse communication styles and cultural nuances.

Dr. Patrick McNamara- the Executive Director of the US-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission, shared valuable insights on cross cultural learning, and about the benefits and opportunities presented by the Fulbright Scholarship Program, opening new avenues for professional development and cross-border educational opportunities. Sri Lankan Fulbright Fellow Ms. Imalka Wickramasinghe, currently an English language teacher at the Ibbagamuwa Thaksala Maha Vidyalaya, joined with Dr. McNamara in sharing her personal sojourn as a Fulbright Teacher Excellence Award (TEA) recipient, and her current contribution to the Sri Lankan schools.

Dr. Dharmathilake Wijekoon, the Director-Academic Affairs of SACTD presented a number of energizer activities to help engage a classroom throughout a lesson, and provided a recap of the

Sessions through an engaging collective activity. He also introduced the upcoming programmes of SACTD and shared details of the ongoing google survey by SACTD to identify the gaps and strengths of teacher training institutions in South Asia.

Day 1 Highlights: Resources and Interactive Activities for Language Learners

The first day began with an overview of the workshop objectives. The sessions were highly engaging, featuring an introduction to interactive strategies that showcased adaptable activities for various language levels. Educators participated in a ‘Socratic Seminar’ designed to enhance critical thinking and active listening skills, followed by a ‘Fishbowl Activity’ that fostered vocabulary enhancement and community building in the classroom. The day concluded with a focus on cultural communication, allowing participants to explore how culture influences communication styles through insightful case studies.

Day 2 Highlights: Effective Communication Across Borders

The second day commenced with a recap of the previous day's key takeaways, setting the stage for further exploration. Participants engaged in interactive activities such as Communication Style Mapping, which examined direct and indirect communication styles across different cultures. The “Decode This Gesture” game encouraged understanding of non-verbal cues, while a comprehensive overview of cultural dimensions addressed verbal and non-verbal communication, power distance, and hierarchical differences. The participants enjoyed a number of roleplays that expose their talents in communication and understanding the learners, while providing them with a unique opportunity to enhance their professional skills and connect with peers in the field.

The Workshop was attended by teachers and educators from public sector schools, which included Central Collage Piliyandala, Thaksala Maha Vidyalaya-Ibbagamuwa, Regional English Support Centres (RESC) in Mathara and Gampola, and Sri Gnanodaya Central College, Wariyapola. The teachers and administrators of several Private Sector International Schools, and Institutions namely, Hilburn Collage-Avissawella, Sujatha Vidhyalaya-Nugegoda, Highlands Collage-Maharagama, Leeds International Collage, Royal Institute International School, Amal International School-Colombo 05, Institute of Chartered Corporate Secretaries of Sri Lanka, Informatics Institute of Technology, Cinnamon Hospitality Academy, and the Maldives Cultural Centre in Colombo, joined for the first time, at a programme conducted by SACTD-UNESCO C2C. The participants expressed their satisfaction on the new learning experience gained.

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