

# LankaCorps



LankaCorps is a unique opportunity for young leaders of Sri Lankan heritage to professionally engage in social, cultural, and economic development activities in Sri Lanka. The program aims to foster the involvement and understanding of young members of the expatriate Sri Lankan community who have limited in-depth experience with the country of their heritage. Each year, The Asia Foundation selects an outstanding group of LankaCorps Fellows to live and work for six months in Sri Lanka, granting them the unique chance to “explore their roots while giving back.”

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In order to provide young adults of Sri Lankan heritage the opportunity to engage in social, cultural and economic development activities in Sri Lanka, see the country today through their own eyes, and arrive at a better unfiltered understanding of its contemporary affairs, The Asia Foundation launched the LankaCorps program in 2012. This fellowship program gives young professionals of Sri Lankan origin the opportunity to contribute to the dynamic, multi-ethnic nation's post-war recovery through six-month fellowships where they will be placed in government agencies, the private sector, and community-based organizations and nonprofits.

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

LankaCorps Fellows will be placed with host organizations identified by The Asia Foundation in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. These individual placements will be supplemented by an orientation program, language training and two organized cultural field trips. The Asia Foundation staff will offer in-country advisory and logistical support for the Fellows during the six-month internship. Read more about previous Fellows and their placements at [www.lankacorps.org](http://www.lankacorps.org).

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The fellowship will provide roundtrip international airfare, in-country expenses (including a monthly stipend) and health insurance coverage.



## ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants must:

- Be at least 21 years of age, and not over 30, on the projected start date;
- Have at least a bachelor's degree with high academic achievement;
- Have demonstrable leadership skills and civic engagement;
- Be in excellent physical health;
- Be of Sri Lankan heritage; and
- Have U.S. or Canadian citizenship.

Candidates in all fields will be considered; however, preference will be given to those whose background and interests are likely to contribute to Sri Lanka's development.



“Before LankaCorps everything I knew about Sri Lanka, the people, the culture, the religions and of course the politics was through something or someone else. But after LankaCorps I have a real deep emotional and personal connection with

Sri Lanka. I have my own experiences, good [and] bad ... I have my own Sri Lankan work experience, my own Sri Lankan friends, my own favorite restaurants and even my own favorite temple.”

– Sivashankar Krishnakumar, 2012 LankaCorps Fellow



“The LankaCorps program provided me with the unique opportunity to connect with my Sri Lankan heritage and contribute to post-conflict development in a substantial way. I believe that this fellowship experience was crucial to

helping me understand the issues facing the country five years after the end of the civil war. Though I had never been to Sri Lanka before, the country loomed large in my life in Toronto. Having grown up in one of the largest Tamil diaspora communities in the world, stories of the conflict shaped the way that I understood the country. Naturally, much of the nuance that is present in Sri Lankan society was lost in this one-dimensional portrayal. Having the opportunity to live, work and travel in Sri Lanka allowed me to explore the different factors that contributed to the war and how Sri Lankans are working to ensure successful post-war reconciliation.”

-Suruthi Ragulan, 2014 LankaCorps Fellow



“The opportunities that The Asia Foundation LankaCorps Fellowship gave me exceeded my expectations – I was able to connect with Sri Lanka on a deeper level; make new and lasting friendships; watch the diaspora form ties and see

past the ‘developing country’ and ‘post-conflict’ labels; meet with experts about many facets of the country; get to know new parts of the island and people through work and travel; and explore my identity.”

– Harshi Hettige 2013 LankaCorps Fellow



“I am also incredibly grateful for the opportunity to connect with the other fellows. Living together gave us a chance to have deep conversations about the triumphs and challenges in our work, and the differences and similarities between our backgrounds and our experiences in

Sri Lanka. I am so grateful, as a Sri Lankan-American raised in a Sinhala Buddhist community, to have had the chance to live and become good friends with a Sri Lankan-Canadian raised in a Tamil Hindu community. Sharing our different experiences of what the term ‘Sri Lankan’ meant to us each growing up (exclusion of the other group) helped open both of our minds and show us that there is much more to Sri Lanka than what our small immigrant/diaspora communities taught us back home.”

– Ruvani Fonseka, 2015 LankaCorps Fellow

## HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2013)  
 Centre for Poverty Analysis (2014/2015)  
 Emerge Lanka Foundation (2015)  
 Family Planning Association (2014)  
 Family Rehabilitation Centre (2015)  
 Federation of Environmental Organizations (2013)  
 Foundation of Goodness (2012/2013/2015)  
 Genetech (2014)  
 Good Practices Group (2014)  
 Institute of Policy Studies (2014)  
 International Centre for Ethnic Studies (2015)

Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute (2012/2013)  
 MAS Holdings (2012)  
 National Water Supply and Drainage Board (2012)  
 Redlime Pvt. Limited (2014)  
 Regional Center for Strategic Studies (2013)  
 Sri Lanka Unites (2013)  
 The Post Graduate Institute of Archeology (2013)  
 University of Visual and Performing Arts (2013)  
 Verite Research (2014/2015)  
 Women in Need (2012/2015)

## HEADQUARTERS

465 California St., 9th Floor  
 San Francisco, CA 94104



The Asia Foundation

## SRI LANKA

30/1 Bagatalle Road  
 Colombo 3, Sri Lanka  
 Tel: + 94 (11) 269-8356  
[srilanka.general@asiafoundation.org](mailto:srilanka.general@asiafoundation.org)