

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 development through six-month fellowships where they will be placed in government agencies, the private sector, and community-based organizations and nonprofits. Placements are customized to Fellow's interests, experience and qualifications.

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 a multi-disciplinary 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.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Fellowship will provide round-trip 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. (Citizens of other countries considered on a case-by-case basis)

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, bad, and even ugly... 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 Fellowship provided me with an opportunity to reconnect with my relatives in Sri Lanka, many of whom I had long lost touch with—it was my first trip back to Sri Lanka in 13.5 years. It also helped establish a strong sense of Sri Lankan identity and attachment to my country of birth. I'm not entirely sure what these things will lead to, but I certainly have a strong desire to engage with Sri Lanka and contribute to the future of my country in some capacity. It is possible that the stronger bond that I now have (as a result of LankaCorps) to both Sri Lanka and its people may be the one thing that ensures that I stay committed to these aspirations well into the future."

– **Anthony Obeyesekere**, 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 background 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 (exclusive 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



"Personally, the fellowship was extremely valuable to me. It brought me to the country for the first time and brought my parents back for the first time since they left. In that way, it left a lasting meaningful connection to Sri Lanka for my family in a way that nothing else could have. I do feel a different perception of the country and am much more invested

now than ever to help in the country's development, as I would like to look into returning to Sri Lanka in the future and working further in the psychosocial field."

– **Shaaranya Pillai**, 2016 LankaCorps Fellow

HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Carbon Consulting Company (2016)	International Centre for Ethnic Studies (2015/2016)
Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2013)	Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute (2012/2013)
Centre for Poverty Analysis (2014/2015/2016)	MAS Holdings (2012)
Chitrasena Dance Academy (2016)	National Water Supply and Drainage Board (2012)
Emerge Lanka Foundation (2015)	OpenDRI (2016)
Family Planning Association (2014)	Redlime Pvt. Limited (2014)
Family Rehabilitation Centre (2015/2016)	Regional Center for Strategic Studies (2013)
Federation of Environmental Organizations (2013)	Sri Lanka Unites (2013)
Foundation of Goodness (2012/2013/2015/2016)	The Post Graduate Institute of Archeology (2013)
Genetech (2014)	University of Visual and Performing Arts (2013)
Good Practices Group (2014)	Verite Research (2014/2015)
Institute of Policy Studies (2014)	Women in Need (2012/2015)

HEADQUARTERS

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