

Category 1: Strategic activities of NYAs of relevance to the UN SDGs

Dr. Dilushan R. Jayasundara, Immediate Past President, Sri Lankan Academy of Young Scientists

[dilushanj@phys.cmb.ac.lk]

Topic/Activity: Strategic initiative towards research for impact and the role of Sri Lankan Academy of Young Scientists (SLAYS). The UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a call for action to find solutions for global challenges and increasingly complex problems faced by modern societies. Innovative solutions to such challenges are often found through collaborative work of enthusiastic and self-motivated scientists from diverse disciplines. SLAYS, in bringing together multidisciplinary, early and mid-career scientists create new opportunities for more innovative and effective approaches to address some of the above challenges.

Collaborators/SDGs addressed: SLAYS annual activities include two major programs, SLAYS Open Forum and SLAYS 3 minute thesis competition which is supported by the University of Queensland, Australia under 3MT® and organized in collaboration with National Science Foundation (NSF) Sri Lanka. Both programs provide a common platform that unifies young scientists spread out across the country with the intention of promoting and uplifting research culture, attitudes and best approaches for gainful and impactful research. These activities directly or indirectly address the SDGs gender equality (5), Economic growth (8), innovation (9), reduce inequality (10) and promote partnerships (17).

Progress/Outcomes: We have initiated two TV programs taking young scientist research to general public. These programs broadly aim at dissemination of scientific findings of relevance to the society in a simple manner; provide recognition for talented young scientists, create enthusiasm in general public, especially in school children for a scientific carrier, and to get interested personal to be collaborators/funders/resource personal in scientific research and development. Through these programs SLAYS has also being able to get recognition from policy makers to contribute towards the development of the strategic scientific policy for Sri Lanka, and the enablers and challenges encountered. Some of the above outcomes are within the recommendations made by IAP in terms of strengthening knowledge platform through shared learning, involvement in science policy, and communicating the value of the SDGs to a wider audience.