

Youth & Young Water Professionals Platform of South Asia

Baseline Survey Report



Sri Lanka Water Partnership

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Background

The overall aim of this survey is to gather information from the individuals above 15 years old who are actively engaged in the youth related activities in the water sector, including civil activists, officials of mandated institutes that interact with youth and politicians who are involved in policy development on youth in Sri Lanka. The survey attempted to explore youth perception and their interest on a Regional Youth platform for them to actively engage, share their knowledge and collaboratively work with other young leaders/activists in the region. Based on the quantitative approach, the baseline survey was developed and the information was gathered through online platform (Google forms) and face to face interviews with selected persons. The target group for the survey was the youth represented in three age categories (15-25, 26- 35, 36 and older). The collected data was analysed using statistical data analysis techniques. The information gathered from the baseline survey will feed into a regional baseline report on youth engagement status in the region.

The United Nations General Assembly defined “Youth” as those who between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive. As stated by the Commonwealth Youth Programme, between the ages of 16-29 are classified as youth. In Sri Lankan context, according to the National youth policy (2014) “youth” is defined as the population between 15-29 years. In view of the socio-cultural, economic and other factors specific to Sri Lanka, for the purpose of this policy “Youth” is defined as all young women and men between the aforesaid age categories.

According to the census conducted in 2012 in Sri Lanka reports that nearly 15.6 % of the population comprise of approximately 3.2 million youth; for every 100 persons there are nearly 16 young people.

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The total number of responses received for this baseline survey was 56 . Analysis of demographic profile of the survey respondents reveals that 36% were male and the 64% were female (figure 1). As shown in Figure 2, a majority of the respondents fall into the age group of 15-25 years.

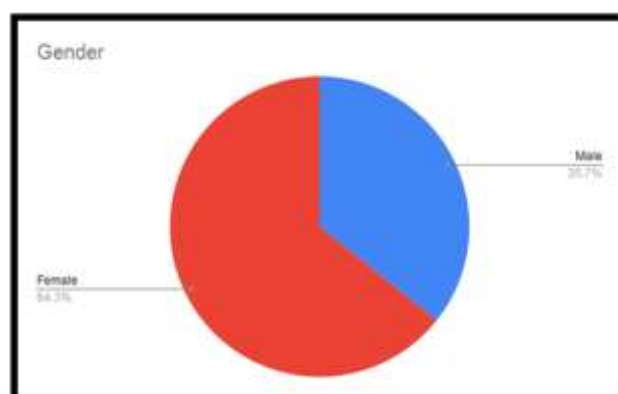


Figure 1: Gender profile of the respondents

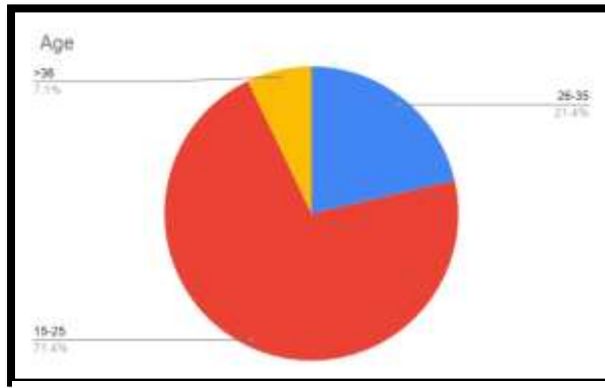


Figure 2: Age profile of the respondents

Analysis of occupational status of the respondent reveals that the majority (75%) of the respondents are students and other (25%) are employed (figure 3).

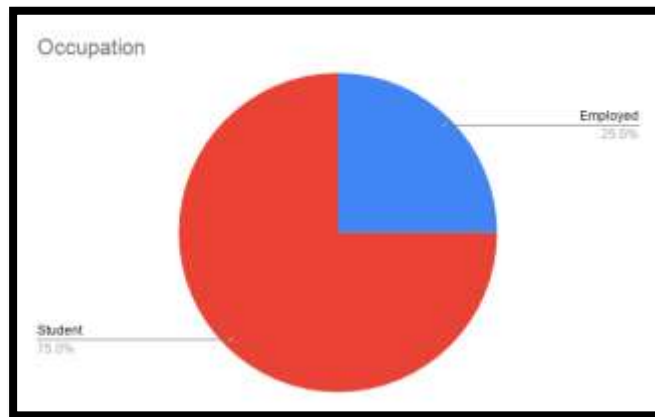


Figure 3: Occupation profile of the respondents

2. Policies, strategies, laws and incentives

In Sri Lanka there are number of mechanisms presently operating and committed to foster, empower and engage Sri Lankan youth in the decision making and policy development process and ultimately to develop them as a sustainable empowering community.

The Youth Development Division within the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Skill Development is responsible for youth affairs and is the “main institution” responsible for implementing the national youth policy (2014) (https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Sri_Lanka_2014_National_Youth_Policy.pdf) to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy. The Youth Development Division is also responsible for policies relating to youth development, including careers guidance, cultural programmes, and international cooperation.

In Sri Lanka, National Youth Services Council (https://www.nysc.lk/index_e.php) was established under the Volunteer National Youth Services Act No. 11 of the year 1967 and was revised by the Act No. 52 of 1968. Over the years, activities of the Youth Council were expanded beyond volunteerism and subsequently the scope was revised again under the

Youth Services Council Act No.69 of 1979 giving the status of a fully pledged youth development organization.

3. Organizations and services that empower youth

3.1 Sri Lanka Federation of Youth Clubs

https://www.nysc.lk/clubfederation_e.php#:~:text=%20Objectives%20of%20Sri%20Lanka%20Federation%20of%20Youth,requirements%20related%20to%20national%20development%20and...%20More%20

This organization was established in order for the young generation to express their views freely and independently and also to present the same to the Government and the administration as it was necessary to have an organization of their own which expands from the rural level to the national level. Following are the functions of this organization.

- Developing the leadership capacities of the youth
- Developing sports skills
- Improving of Art skills
- Implementation of programs to create national and religious reconciliation and co-existence
- Implementation of social welfare programs
- Direct intervention in youth problems of the country

3.2 Sri Lanka Youth Parliament

https://www.nysc.lk/aboutParliament_e.php

The Sri Lanka Youth Parliament was initially established in 2010 commemorating the International Year for Youth, although its concept was surfaced around the latter part of 1990 with the commencement of the “Yovun Puraya “program. This is established with the focus of young political participation and to enhance the young participation including women, disabled and ethnically differentiated communities in decision making process of the country. Moreover the Youth Parliament have already become an instance of a political training school ; as such it has introduced young politicians to the local and the provincial levels of Sri Lankan national politics.

<p>Other Active youth entities/organizations in Sri Lanka</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lanka Unites • Leo club • Rotaract club • National Youth Corps Training Center • V-Force Vocational Training Centre • Api Youth Club • Jaffna Youth Congress • National Cadet Corps • Young Water Professionals Group • AIESEC • Catholic Students Society • Youth club of church
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YMCA, YMBA • Sarvodaya • Siragahal, Royal youth, • Young Men’s Buddhist Association • Youth club ,Ibbagamuwa • Youth and Innovation (UNDP) • NGOs like UN volunteers • Young members section of Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka • Scout and Girl Guides associations, • St. John Sri Lanka, • AIESEC Sri Lanka • Young Zoologists/Biologists Association • NISCO
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Currently ,in Sri Lanka youth involvement in decision making or policy development process mainly occur through volunteering and activism through different organizations/youth clubs and as engagements in different environmental and social upliftment projects. In addition to that, they are actively engaged through promoting petitions, theme based support groups, international meetings, co management of projects and consultations with decision makers.

Analysis of the active engagement of the respondents in a youth organization or working as an activists reveals that majority of them are not actively participate in such activities (57%) (figure 4).

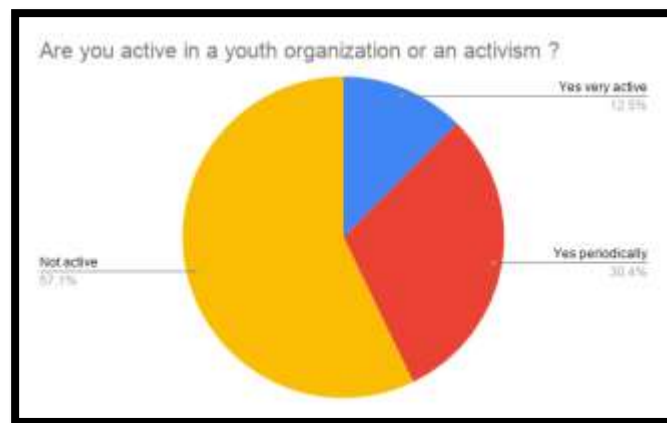


Figure 4: Engagement with youth organizations

The greatest limitations for the lack of youth participation in different youth activities are stated as time constraints, lack of knowledge and awareness of such activities, limited access to decision makers and lack of motivation. According to the survey suggested there is a certain percentage of youth who believes that there is no barrier or constraint for them to engage in youth activities.

Survey respondents who are actively engaged in youth activities stated that the key motivational factors which lead them to join with youth organizations are to gain knowledge experience and skills, develop visibility and networking opportunities, a personal desire to make a difference in society, travel opportunities, socializing and fun.

The majority of the respondents (96%) identified social media as the most effective method of communication with the youth on the above topics. In addition to that following methods of communication were also highlighted by the respondents.

- Print media
- Inventions, innovations and networking
- Using zoom or google forums
- Through contacts with adults active in social services

4. Establishment of a Regional Youth Network and a Platform

More than 95% of the respondents of the survey highlighted the importance of a regional youth network ; they believe that it is necessary to have an online platform dedicated to youth in South Asia region to bring youth activists and young leaders to a one common platform. According to the survey, youth community in the country is expecting to have following activities in a Regional Youth platform.

- Webinars on youth projects in different regions
- Discussions and meetings with other youth organizations
- Capacity building and professional development resources
- Information and experiences sharing opportunities
- Discussion on current topics such as disaster risk reduction, climate change etc.

Following table is a summary of the responses given by youth related to the Regional youth network and a platform.

<p>If there was a space for youth organizations in the region come together to collaborate and share experiences, how that would be beneficial</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a platform for youth to integrate and share knowledge, skills and experiences on different topics 2. Exposure to new projects and innovative ideas 3. Provides an opportunity to less privileged youth groups including rural and estate sector youth 4. Encourage the youth to share values and obtain cross cultural experience while developing skills 5. Different expertise and different skill levels which will create a more innovative and more sustainable impact 6. Provide a platform to share present global strategies to empower youth 7. Empowerment and capacity building of different youth groups in the country 8. Engage youth in the decision making process
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Importance and purpose of a regional youth network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To collaborate and integrate regional youth 2. Socializing with other youth in an effective manner 3. To share ideas on critical youth issues and involve them in policy development process 4. To create a link between youths in the region 5. To overcome barricades faced by youth in the region. 6. Enhance creativity and innovative skills 7. Share success stories and experiences of the youth within the region 8. To improve collaboration and partnerships among the different youth stakeholders on specific themes
Potential stakeholders that have showed interest in collaborating with a Youth platform	<p> Youth ministries of governments NGOs/CSOs Youth Clubs Sri Lanka Water Partnership Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka National Water Supply & Drainage Board Sri Lanka Unites Sarvodaya Sangamaya International Youth Alliance for Peace Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka </p>

Furthermore, in person and zoom interviews were conducted with 10 persons selected from within the sample. Their responses are clustered as follows.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the results it is clear that the youth community in Sri Lanka has an interest and overall understanding about the importance of a regional youth network and platform. As the survey revealed that smaller percentage of the respondents do not have any idea about youth engagement or activism mainly because of the lack of awareness and knowledge.

In the Asian context, due to the cultural limitations and social inhibitions certain youth groups including women are reluctant to engage in such activities but online platform will give them the opportunity to participate and share their perspectives. A Youth platform should focus on all youth sectors of the community including the rural village community and the marginalized youth community in estate sector.

In this baseline survey quantitative data collection is used.

Resources required by youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • Computer facilities • Expertise skills and knowledge • Digital equipment
Institutions which should work on to engage youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Religious institutions (Churches, temples, mosques) • Universities • Higher education institutes • Multi-National Companies • Private companies • NGOs
Training needs suggested by youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career development • Leadership development • International language training specially English • Awareness and Capacity building • Mental health development • Vocation training • Motivational and entrepreneur development • Technical Skills development • Attitude development programmes • Professional qualification enhancing programme
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct involvement in decision making process • Provide the opportunity to be engaged in different activities • Strengthening partnerships with different stakeholders • Policy formulation and development related to youth • Enhance youth participation in the development process of the country
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote volunteerism • Community based activities • Active engagement at school level • Youth empowering activities

Conclusion

This activity took place under a series of social stresses - lockdowns , burgeoning infection rates, loss of livelihood, escalating etc ; thereby getting the attention of respondents to such an exercise was difficult. The sample size should have been increased but due to Covid 19 pandemic situation, access was restricted in outreach to certain youth communities to get their perspective , especially the rural and estate sector community those who do limited computer or internet facilities.

Sri Lanka Water Partnership has supported young water professional groups in Uva and Jaffna provinces. All programs scheduled to be conducted with these groups as well as the setting up of a YWP group in Central Province were postponed due to the pandemic.

In order to get a more accurate and reliable output, a more extensive quantitative analysis supported by qualitative data analysis carried out within a longer space of time is recommended.

1 Questionnaire of the Baseline survey

12/17/2020

Youth & Young Water Professionals Platform of South Asia

Youth & Young Water Professionals Platform of South Asia

Baseline Survey

* Required

Part 1: Basic information about the participant

1. 1.1 Name :

2. 1.2 Gender *

Mark only one oval.

Male

Female

3. 1.3 Age *

Mark only one oval.

15-25

26-35

>36

4. 1.4 Email address *

5. 1.5 Contact No

6. 1.6 Occupation *

Mark only one oval.

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Other: _____

7. 1.7 Country

Part 2 : Introduction

8. In your country who is considered as "Youth" *

Part 3: Policies, strategies, laws and incentives

9. 3.1 Does your country have a National youth strategy/youth ministry/council? *

Check all that apply.

- National youth strategy
- Youth Ministry
- Other: _____

10. 3.2 List out active youth entities/organizations in your country/area

Part 4: Organizations and services that empower youth

11. 4.1 What services are currently needed by youth but are not provided?

12. 4.2 Are you active in a youth organization or an activism ? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes very active
- Yes periodically
- Not active

13. 4.3 If yes, please state the organization/s that you belong to and your position

14. 4.4 What motivates you to join with youth organizations? (You may number them as per your priority) *

Mark only one oval per row.

	To gain knowledge experience and skills	Desire to make a difference	Socializing	Fun	Travel opportunity	Visibility and networking
1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. 4.5 What are some of the barriers that limit active youth participation? *

Check all that apply.

- limited access to decision makers
- knowledge on where to start
- competition with global organizations
- time
- there are no barriers.

Other: _____

16. 4.6 Do youth organizations usually work together? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

17. 4.7 Do you think if there was a space for youth organizations in the region come together to collaborate and share experiences, would that be beneficial? Yes or no and why *

18. 4.8 Are youth currently involved in decision-making or policy processes? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

19. 4.9 In what forms are young people usually involved *

Check all that apply.

- a. activism through organizations / youth clubs
- b. volunteer work
- c. project activities
- d. petitions, support groups, international meetings
- e. Co management of projects
- f. Consultations with decision makers

Part 5: Establishment of a Regional Youth Network and a Platform

20. 5.1 Do you see the importance of a regional youth network? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

21. 5.2 What should the purpose of such organization be?

22. 5.3 Would you be interested in joining a regional youth network for South Asia? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

23. 5.4 Any potential stakeholders that have showed interest in collaborating with such a platform

24. 5.5 What is the most effective methods of communication with the youth on the above topic *

Check all that apply.

- Printed media
- social media

Other: _____

25. 5.6 Do you think there is a need for an online platform dedicated to youth activities in South Asia? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

26. 5.7 What activities would you like to see in a regional youth platform? *

Check all that apply.

- a. Webinars on youth projects in different regions
- b. Discussions and meet ups with other youth organizations
- c. Capacity building and professional development resources
- d. Information sharing
- e. All of the above

Other: _____

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Google Forms

Annexure 2 Case studies

2.1 Summary of Interview with a Youth activist (Sinhala)

A.N. , a second year undergraduate of the University of Ruhuna, participated in a follow up interview of the baseline survey. Currently ,she is actively engaged in different youth organizations at regional level. She expressed her interest in learning more about the SAS Regional Youth Network and platform as it will provide a good opportunity for her to work collaboratively with other youth and to get a good exposure for her to develop her own skills. According to her perspective, most critically needed activity to engage youth in the present situation is the decision making process. She further explained the present situation which involves only a small percentage of the youth in that process. She pointed out the importance of increasing that percentage up to a significant level to achieve an outcome.

A. emphasized that how the institutions like schools, higher education institutes and religious institutions should be more involved in identifying true potential and capacity of the youth. Furthermore, her suggestions were to involve different stakeholders including public sector, private sector and NGOs in the process of developing specific capacity building initiatives for youth.

She highlighted the training needs such as International language skill developmental training because it has been identified as a major restriction to youth accessing opportunities and which refrain their engagement in national and international youth related activities. In addition to that she emphasised the importance of providing knowledge and training on computer literacy.

2.2 Summary of the Interview with an estate sector Youth activist (Tamil)

L.C is a Post graduate student of University of Peradeniya and currently working in Bogawantala veterinary hospital. Although she is interested she is not currently engaged in any youth organization but she expressed her enthusiasm to learn more about the Regional Youth Network and platform. According to her point of view, most critically needed activity to engage youth is raising awareness and giving them the knowledge on the importance of their role in youth activities. Secondly she emphasized there should essentially have support for a mind-set change mechanism as there are number of issues and conflicts occurring in her community among youth representing different age categories.

L. emphasized the family as the most critical and fundamental unit which should be involved in the capacity building of the youth. In addition to that religious institutions, political parties, schools, higher education institutes and youth organization should work on to involve youth in the development and review of policies/laws related to Youth and capacity building. She also emphasised the role of the media to play in empowering youth

She also suggested the need to develop training programmes such as leadership training, religious practices as meditation to drug addicted youth etc in order to bring them into the mainstream. To further encourage youth engagement she suggested to facilitate them with access to computers, internet and infrastructure facilities .