

Project Brief

Networking for Advancement of Solutions to Emerging Issues (NEASE)

Center for Development Research and Interventions, Sri Lanka

Sponsor: The Royal Academy of Engineering

Introduction to the project

The challenges we are facing today following the spread of the COVID pandemic and the resultant social and economic dislocation, both globally and locally are of enormous significance in terms of the responses that they demand from all segments of society including the academics and researchers. It is in this context that the Centre for Development Research and Interventions intends to build a network both nationally and internationally, in order to bring together academics and researchers from Sri Lanka, the Asian region and other countries in Europe and elsewhere.

This initiative is intended to create a Network for the advancement of solutions through learning and sharing of potential solutions, based on international experiences, to emerging social and economic issues such as the ones that have been created by the Pandemic. The focus of the network will be on sustainable solutions to address persisting and emerging social and economic issues in order to advance SDG's related to Hunger, inequality, unemployment, Gender inequality and strengthening partnerships.

The core project outputs include the following;

- (1) Learn from scholars/researchers/practitioners on experiences gained by communities from within their countries and the region through a series of webinars.
- (2) Identify intervention models to share through webinars as well as surveys conducted using structured questionnaires;
- (3) Create a platform for discussion and exchange of ideas on current issues: the platform includes a website and a Mobile app for members to exchange ideas/ data;
- (4) Document and disseminate findings through a Newsletter.

Project objectives

There are five objectives for this project. The core of this project is the setting up of two networks, one in Sri Lanka and the other international, bringing together scholars, researchers and practitioners through a blended platform involving both virtual and in person interactions where possible. The other objectives arise as a result of the establishment of the network.

- 1.) To create networks that cut across local, regional and global levels enabling the learning and sharing of ideas, research findings and practical experiences. The network will be developed within the first quarter.
- 2) To utilize the network as a forum for scholars/researchers to share their insights, analyses and interventions, (socio-economic) related to Covid-19 and its recovery.
- 3.) To use this network to identify replicable and sustainable models of intervention to address emerging issues in the context of a national or global emergency like the pandemic.
- 4.) To enable the Governments, Civil Society organizations and the private sector to make informed intervention decisions via dissemination and advocacy tools such as periodic updates using the website , electronic newsletter and policy briefs.

Outcomes and Impacts

Bring together academics and researchers based in different parts of the world who are expected to deliberate on emerging issues with a view to identifying appropriate interventions to address them. The expected outcome of these deliberations is a shared understanding of the issues and possible responses. Such a shared understanding based on evidence and identification of possible responses are expected to result in the adoption of suitable policies and appropriate interventions to address the problems.

The whole world is experiencing the effects of social and economic dislocations caused by the pandemic. The members of the network would be able to find common ground in order to come up with intervention models that could be replicated across countries, and might be enable the network to present and disseminate the replicable invention models.

A vibrant network of interdisciplinary academics and researchers would influence the thinking and actions of stakeholders such as Governments, the Private sector and Civil Society organizations resulting in the necessary changes in their respective domains such

as policy making, capital investment and grassroots innovations.

Implementation strategy

The CDRI has signed an agreement with The Royal Academy of Engineering to implement the project: “Networking for Advancement of Solutions to Emerging Issues (NEASE)” on 26th of October 2020. The project team has been formed and is working from Sri Lanka under the leadership of Professor Siri Hettige, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Colombo.

The project is guided by an elaborate implementation plan. The activities will be carried out in accordance with the plan. The activities will be closely monitored by the team lead to ensure objectives and outcomes are achieved as planned.