

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY 2025

"Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Well-being"



OUR COMMITMENT

The National Institute of Social Development (NISD) marked World Social Work Day 2025 with a dynamic gathering of social work professionals, academics, and students. Centered on the theme “Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Wellbeing,” the event highlighted social work’s crucial role in bridging generations and fostering community resilience. More than just a one-day celebration, it aimed to be an evolving initiative that addresses the needs of social work for holistic development and well-being while advancing the professionalization of social work in Sri Lanka.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The event opened with an inspiring welcome speech, which underscored the significance of intergenerational bonds in strengthening social cohesion.

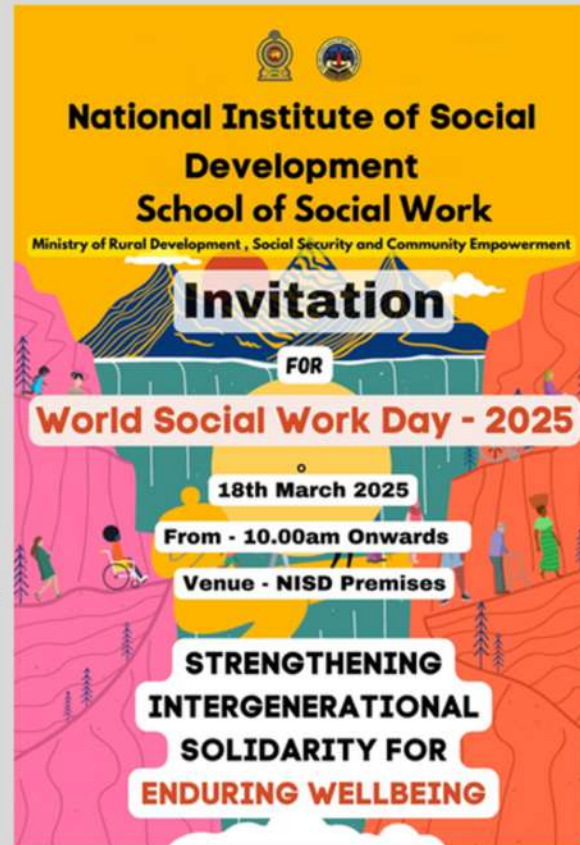


Senior Prof. Wasantha Subasinghe,
Director General
NISD

Ms. Nananayakkara emphasized the government's commitment at the macro level, particularly in addressing policy and implementation gaps. She highlighted the need for stronger frameworks and strategic interventions to ensure that social policies effectively translate into tangible benefits for communities.



Ms. Radha Nananayakkara
Additional Secretary, Ministry of
Rural Development, Social Security,
and Community Empowerment



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Mr. Wishwa Jayawardene

Student – Bachelor of Social Work, NISD

A BSW students shared insights on social work principles, challenges, and practical applications, highlighting adaptability and critical thinking, with Mohamed Wasee moderating the Tamil Medium session.

Ms. Shamini Attanayake

Former Director General, NISD

Emphasized the collaborative efforts in developing social work in Sri Lanka, highlighting contributions from academics, practitioners, and policymakers. She stressed the progress made in professionalizing the field and the need for sustained partnerships to enhance social work education, practice, and policy.

Ms. Gowry Vasudevan,

Additional Director General, / Academic covering up Duties, NISD.

Offered a compelling reflection on this year's theme, emphasizing the increasing importance of intergenerational solidarity in navigating today's changing social landscape.

STUDENT PERFORMANCES:

CELEBRATING INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY



Students led a compelling drama highlighting the importance of bridging generational gaps and preserving cultural values. The event also featured a vibrant traditional welcome dance, symbolizing harmony and respect across generations. These performances beautifully reinforced the theme of intergenerational solidarity through art and culture.



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ENGAGING PANEL DISCUSSION: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

A compelling panel discussion explored the many dimensions of strengthening family and community ties: Mr. Ranaweera expertly moderated the panel discussion, drawing on his decades of experience in social work, both within Sri Lanka and internationally. His vast knowledge and first-hand experience in the field brought invaluable insights, guiding the conversation with a depth of understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by social workers globally. His leadership throughout the session reflected his dedication to advancing social work practice and his commitment to fostering meaningful discussions that bridge local and global perspectives.

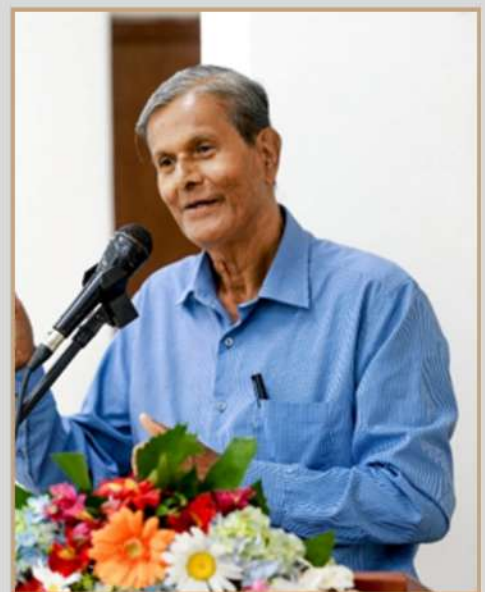


Mr. Amarawansa Ranaweera
Former Director, School of Social work

FAMILY SOLIDARITY – THE UNSEEN BATTLE

Prof. Siri Hettige stood firm, as though a sentinel guarding the ideals of family integrity. In a world where isolation creeps in like a silent thief, he sounded the alarm against the forces of individualism that threaten to dismantle the very fabric of family life. His words were a call to arms, urging society to rebuild the values of intergenerational bonds, for they are the foundation upon which resilient communities are built. The fight for solidarity within families is not just a social cause, it is a war against fragmentation.

"Intergenerational solidarity is usually embedded in a healthy family environment and is manifested by its vital functions like primary socialisation, protection and care of children ensuring their physical and intellectual development, while often providing a caring environment for the elderly and other vulnerable members such as ones with disabilities. So, a healthy family is important for the wellbeing of both young and old alike. Intergenerational solidarity is also manifested at a societal level in the form of transmission of accumulated knowledge and wisdom, in particular, indigenous knowledge, from older to younger generations at both family and broader institutional levels such as modern education where the teachers play a catalytic role. Yet, as is well known, the ongoing ICT revolution and widespread use of mobile devices has become a major disruptive factor impinging on the above processes that demand attention of both the adult memories of the family and the policy makers."



Prof. Siri Hettige, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Colombo and Adjunct Professor at RMIT, Melbourne, chairs Sri Lanka's National Police Commission and leads the Association of Sri Lankan Sociologists. His expertise spans youth, education, social policy, and governance, with global academic experience.

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Mr. V. Jeyaruban, Director at the School of Social Work, is dedicated to social work education, curriculum development, and community outreach. He fosters an inclusive learning environment, promotes leadership development, and integrates diversity and equity initiatives to ensure a sustainable work culture at NISD.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT – THE BATTLE FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE:

Mr. Sasika Konara, with the intensity of a general leading troops into a revolution, underscored the power of social work to reshape entire communities. His vision was of social workers not merely as helpers, but as warriors for systemic change, wielding policies like weapons to dismantle the structures that perpetuate inequality. His words were a rallying cry for macro-level practices, urging his audience to recognize that true empowerment requires more than small wins, it demands a strategic shift in the very systems that govern society.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THE FRONTLINES OF MICRO PRACTICE:

Mr. V. Jeyaruban's voice through the noise, clear and commanding, as he detailed the battlefield where social work engages in the struggle for economic justice. The fight isn't just about aid, it's about empowerment, about giving families the tools to rise above their vulnerabilities. He spoke of a multidisciplinary strategy, where every skill, every resource is marshalled to create sustainable support systems. This is the frontline, where micro practices lay the groundwork for long-term change, turning the tide for those who need it most.



Mr. Sasika Konara, a development professional of experience in program design, project management, and SDG integration. Skilled in M&E and donor liaison, the Circular Economy Project Portfolio and represents South Asia in MESA.

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RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Introducing Amarawansa Ranaweera, highlighted his immense contributions to the growth of social work education in Sri Lanka. With a career spanning over three decades, he was instrumental in transforming the Sri Lanka School of Social Work into the National Institute of Social Development (NISD) and securing its recognition as a degree-awarding institution. His leadership led to the establishment of BSW and MSW programs, faculty development, and collaborations with national and international institutions. Beyond academia, his research has influenced policies on youth development, mental health, and social welfare. As a long time leader in professional social work associations, he remains dedicated to strengthening the field and its impact on society.



Ms. Manjula Wijesekara,
Senior Lecturer & Director of the Centre
for Quality Assurance at NISD



A moment of honor was dedicated to Mr. A. Ranaweera, Former Director of the School of Social Work, NISD, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to social work education. His work has played a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of professionals committed to social justice and community well-being in Sri Lanka and beyond.

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BUILDING STRONGER ALUMNI NETWORKS



The event also served as a valuable opportunity to reconnect with former graduates through the NISD Alumni Association meeting, fostering collaboration on future social work initiatives. MSW alumni Ms. Yasintha Rathnayake, Venuth Thilakarathna, and Sahan Premarathna, alongside the NISD academic team, contributed to discussions on establishing a structured alumni network to support the ongoing professionalization efforts of social work in Sri Lanka.



28th Asia Pacific Social Work Regional Conference
IFSW-AP & APASWE

Social Work Responses to Climate Change and Other Environmental Issues

18th - 21st November 2025




Bandaranayke Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka & Taj Samudhra Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Organized by Sri Lanka Association of Professional Social Workers (SLAPSW)
 Collaboration with National Institute of Social Development (NISD)

Website: www.slapswwa.lk
 Conference email: apswc2025@gmail.com
 Conference website: <https://ifswap2025.slapswwa.lk>

🌐 28TH ASIA PACIFIC SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE 2025



 Date: November 18-21, 2025

 Venue: BMICH & Taj Samudra Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka 

Organized in collaboration with IFSW Asia Pacific & APASWE, this conference will unite social work professionals, academics, and policymakers to tackle the intersection of social work, climate change, and environmental challenges. 🌿🔥 Discussions will explore innovative approaches, cross-sector collaboration, and sustainable solutions for climate-resilient communities. 🌍

◆ Be a part of this movement! Get in touch to join us! ✉️



Conference email : apswc2025@gmail.com

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CLEAN SRI LANKA - COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN



Driving real action as part of the Social Work Day, 250 social work students and NISD staff participated in a clean-up initiative at the Vocational Training Centre for Persons with Disabilities (Department of Social Services, Western Province) and the NISD neighborhood. Led by Ms. Subodini Herath, Program Coordinator, this effort aligns with the "Clean Sri Lanka" initiative, reinforcing the commitment to environmental sustainability at a time when vector-borne diseases are on the rise.



🌍 Thank You! 🙏

This year's World Social Work Day celebration at NISD, Sri Lanka was a remarkable success, showcasing the ✨ power of social work ✨ in strengthening intergenerational bonds, driving economic empowerment, and fostering inclusive communities. ❤️ It was a call to action for continued commitment to building a more connected, resilient, and equitable society.

🙏 A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this success! Keep shining ✨ and making a better world for all 🌍, everywhere ✨, every day!

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MEMORIES BEYOND:



Newsletter Architects:



Ms. Yasintha Rathnayake

NISD MSW Alumni/ International Development Practitioner



Ms. Gowry Vasudevan

Additional Director General, / Academic covering up Duties NISD,