



April- June 2022
Vol 17 no 2

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Special points of interest

- Writing a lay abstract: Reach out to the general public
- Cloud Based Machine Learning for Sports Analytics
- Energy Transitions to Greener and Cleaner Technologies
- Pathway to a Successful Career in Chemistry

SLAAS NEWS

Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science

Writing a lay abstract: Reach out to the general public

In line with the theme of the year “Effective science communication for an informed society”, SLAAS has taken up the challenge of providing expertise for science communicators to disseminate the scientific knowledge clearly to the general public. To enhance the skills and knowledge of aspiring writers to layout facts in a simple and comprehensive manner, SLAAS organized a workshop titled “Writing a lay abstract: Reach out to the general public” on 1st June 2022. The workshop was held on-line via Zoom virtual platform and live-streamed by SLAAS YouTube channel.

The workshop focused primarily on how to convey an idea in science into simple layman’s language. Three expert science communicators in all three languages, English, Sinhala, and Tamil lined up to educate the participants.

Mr. Nalaka Gunawardene (a science writer and a media analyst) talked about the need of communicating science to the public. Dr. Jayantha Wattavidana (a renowned science communicator) and Prof. G. Mikunthan (Professor, University of Jaffna) discussed about simplifying a scientific abstract into public readable content. Prof. Manuj C. Weerasinghe (General President/SLAAS) introduced the scope of the workshop and expert resource persons. Prof. Theshini Perera (Editor/SLAAS) moderated and coordinated the workshop.

This year, for the first time, SLAAS invited all authors to submit an abstract written in layman’s language as an additional file at the time of abstract submission. More than 100 participants, from all over the island, joined to benefit from this workshop.

Due to the high demand and numerous requests, this material is available for viewing under the following links.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g-yl6yUS8c>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_dmr5LRnDQ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVfhWdbOmZM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMcaQ7KDUiA>

Writing a lay abstract: Reach out to the general public

01 June 2022

6.30 pm



The country needs science communicators to take up the challenge of disseminating scientific knowledge clearly to the general public.

This workshop will provide skills and knowledge for aspiring writers to lay out facts in a simple and comprehensive manner.



<https://forms.gle/Hc7LxwWcTzLkDsK>



Workshop organised by
Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science



Section A

Workshops

A workshop was organized by NITM, Department of Ayurveda, on 'Kanta Poshana' for government community medical officers on 8th April 2022 from 9 am to 4 pm. There were 54 participants. Dr. Kaumadi Karunagoda was a resource person and the coordinator for this activity.

A workshop was held for the employees in the Ministry of Health about 'Stress Release' on 22nd April 2022 from 9 am to 4 pm with Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera as the resource person. There were 50 participants at this activity which was coordinated by Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera.

A lecture on current health issues related to pregnancy was conducted for undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Institute of Indigenous Medicine with Professor Anuradha Roi from India as the resource person on 2nd May 2022 from 5 to 7 pm. There were 123 students present and this activity was coordinated by Dr. Kaumadi Karunagoda.

A lecture on Ayurvedha Womens care was held on 24th April from 8 am to 12 noon for 56 Ayurveda Medical Officers with Dr. Kaumadi Karunagoda as the resource person. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Kaumadi Karunagoda.

A programme was conducted on employee motivation at the Ministry of Health on 27th April from 9 am to 4 pm with 58 persons in attendance. Different employee categories of the Ministry of Health participated. Mr. Manoj Handapangoda served as the resource person. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera.

A programme on scientific ways of limited space gardening for staff of the Ministry of Health was held at the Ministry of Health Auditorium on 30th May from 9.30 am to 1 pm with Dr. Sampath Samaraweera and Mrs. Champa Gamage as the resource persons. There were 35 participants. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera.



A workshop on drafting manuscripts and writing a winning abstract was conducted for undergraduates on 15th June. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Kasuni Akalanka.

Field Activities

A diary development programme was conducted in Batticaloa on 12th May from 10 am to 1 pm with Dr. Samantha Iddamaldeniya as the resource person. There were 30 participants. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Samantha Iddamaldeniya.

Webinars

A Webinar series on research publications and presentations was carried out for undergraduates on 26th March and 23rd April 2022 from 9 am to 12 noon for 30 participants. Dr. Romain Perera, Dr. Hemali Jayakodi and Dr. Kasuni Akalanka served as the resource persons at this activity which was coordinated by Ms. Cinthuja Pathmanathan.

A webinar was held to create awareness on healthy life-styles and NCD's for the office staff at "Ayubo Life" with Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera as the resource person on 29th May 2022, from 6 pm to 7.30 pm. There were 30 participants. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera.

Medical Camps



A series of oral health awareness programmes and oral screening programmes were held in Puttalam, Mannar, and Vavuniya districts during the period of 24th March to 7th April to mark the



World Oral Health Month. Around 500 children from selected deprived schools and pre-schools in each district attended. Furthermore, parents of pre-school children were given oral health education.

Dental surgeons and dental therapists of the three districts under the guidance of Dr. R. S. A. Pathmapperruma provided their service. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Nilantha Ratnayaka.

An oral health awareness programme and a dental screening programme was conducted for pre-school children in Kilinochchi district on 5th May 2022 from 9 am to 2 pm. Around 150 pre-school children were screened by the school dental therapists under the supervision of dental surgeons. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Nilantha Ratnayaka.

Newsletter

Articles for the August newsletter were coordinated by Dr. Dushyanthi Jayawardene under the title "Heat and Health" written by Mrs. K. Lankathileke.

Radio and TV Programmes

A live radio programme "Prabhataya" was conducted on 2nd May at 11 am on the Sri Lanka Broadcasting corporation by Dr Kaumadi Karunagoda. The focus of the programme was on traditional foods suitable for cancer patients. This activity was coordinated by Dr Kaumadi Karunagoda.

Other

A "No Plastic Initiative" to enable the Faculty of Medicine Colombo to become a plastic and polythene free zone was held on 18th April 2022 in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine Teachers Association from 8 am to 12 noon. Dr. Sachith Edirisinghe, Prof. Erandi Lokupitiya and Dr. Piyusha Atapattu served as resource persons. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Yasaswi Walpita.

Section B

Sanwada Programme

Section B successfully organized its second “Sanwada” programme which was held on 21st April 2022 via zoom. The theme of the program was “Minimizing food wastage through implementation of postharvest technology”, and Dr. Ruwanka Rathnayake served as the resource person. Dr. Ruwanka Rathnayake currently works as a senior research officer in the National Institute of Post-Harvest Management, and her immense experience on postharvest technology of fruits and vegetables contributed greatly to the program. The program was an open event for any interested party and among the participants, there were scientists, researchers, university students, lecturers and groups that actively engage in local food supply chains. The event created an open platform for both subject specialists and different social groups interested on postharvest technology to have a fruitful discussion, and the received many positive comments.



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zoom

Radio Program on Postharvest Technology of Fruits and Vegetables

Dr. R. M. N. A. Wijewardane, President Section B, participated in a radio program on postharvest technology of fruits and vegetables. Dr. R. M. N. A. Wijewardane is a research expert in the discipline of postharvest technology and currently works as the Head of the Research Division of the National Institute of Post-Harvest Management. The program was broadcast on Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC).



Inter-University Video Contest on Forest Resource Management

Section B has recognized the importance of creating awareness on forest resources of Sri Lanka, among undergraduates, who can actively contribute towards forest resource management for sustainable development of Sri Lanka in the future. Therefore, Section B, together with the Environmental Committee (EC) of SLAAS has organized a video contest to evaluate innovative ideas of undergraduates towards forest resources management for sustainable development of Sri Lanka, in the form of a creative video. Section B committee members, Prof. R. M. Dharmadasa, Dr. R. P. Wanigathunga and Dr. H. M. Herath serve as coordinators of this event. The contest is now open, and 15th July, 2022 will be the last date for the video submissions. Anyone who is interested could find more details at the SLAAS website.



Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science
(Section B and Environmental Committee)

Inter-University Video Contest 2022

“Steps towards forest resources management for sustainable development of Sri Lanka”

Video submission deadline
15th July 2022

❖ Eligibility
Current undergraduates of state or non-state universities/ HEIs in Sri Lanka

❖ Guidelines:
Please refer SLAAS webpage; <https://www.slaas.lk/>

For further details contact:
Dr. Rasika Wanigatunge
SLAAS EC/ Section B
(Tel: 0 719 094 000)

Dr. Harshini Herath
SLAAS Section B
(0 701 902 809)

Section C

Webinar on Transition to a Circular Economy

An energy forum webinar titled “Transition to a Circular Economy” was conducted on 31st March 2022 by Dr. Mayuri Wijayasundara, Director at Anyarta a consulting company. The speaker provided insight for the solution, which can be utilized by organizations in transitioning towards a regenerative model. The session was followed by a question and answer session in which many participants actively participated. The event was jointly organized by Section C of SLAAS, Department of Mechanical Engineering, The Open University of Sri Lanka, and EUSL-Energy Project.

Webinar on Modern Research Methodologies: Breaking the Ice for Impactful findings

A webinar titled “Modern Research Methodologies: Breaking the Ice for Impactful findings” was conducted on 5th April 2022 by Dr. Kaushal Keraminiyage, an academic in the field of community resilience attached to the School of the Built Environment and the Center for Disaster Resilience at University of Salford, UK. The speaker elaborated on research methodologies including different research philosophies on ontology, epistemology and axiology. The session was followed by a question and answer session in which many participants actively participated. The event was organized by SLAAS-Section C in collaboration with General Research Committee of SLAAS and Library Publication Committee of IESL.

MODERN RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES: BREAKING THE ICE FOR IMPACTFUL FINDINGS

ALL ARE WELCOME

Via ZOOM

Tuesday 5th April

@05:00 PM

[Click Here to Join](#)

Resource Person:

Dr. Kaushal Keraminiyage

Dr. Kaushal Keraminiyage is an experienced researcher and an academic in the field of Community Resilience and is attached to the School of the Built Environment and the Centre for Disaster Resilience at University of Salford, United Kingdom. He has a BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying, PG Certificate and PhD in Change Management from University of Salford. He is also a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). Dr. Keraminiyage has involved in a wide array of projects all around the globe and has supervised many graduate students in the broad area of Disaster Resilience and Construction Management.

Meeting ID : 631 4224 5267
Passcode: 1RZFic19

Organized By:

The Section-C and the General Research Committee (GRC) of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) together with The Library & Publication Committee of The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka (IESL)

Section D

Webinar on Industrial Wastewater Treatment

A webinar on ‘Industrial Wastewater Treatment’ was held on the 21st March 2022 from 10 to 11 am in collaboration with KDU. The resource person was Prof. P. G. Rathnasiri, Adjunct Professor of the Faculty of Technology, KDU, Professor in Chemical and Process Engineering, University of Moratuwa. Two case studies based on local wastewater treatment plants were presented at the webinar. The speaker highlighted that industrial wastewater treatment plants need to be established, giving priority to hardware components such as tanks, blowers, piping networks, and recycling because during commissioning, operational and monitoring phases, these plants are frequently subjected to varying environmental, operational, and process conditions leading to failures.

Library Book Donation

The first visit of the library book donation programme was held on 24th March 2022 at the Saaripuththa Secondary School, Matara. Dr Prasanna Premadasa, President of Section D-SLAAS, attended the event.



Workshop on Scientific Writing for Publication

A workshop on “Scientific Writing” was held on 20th April 2022 from 9 am –12 noon *via* Zoom in collaboration with the Staff Development Center of the General Sir John Kothalawala Defence University. Dr. Thamarasi Senaratne and Ms. UD Hiruni Kanchana from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, KDU talked about the preparation of thesis/manuscripts and literature review, and access to electronic information, respectively. Forty-six undergraduate students participated in the workshop.

Newspaper Articles

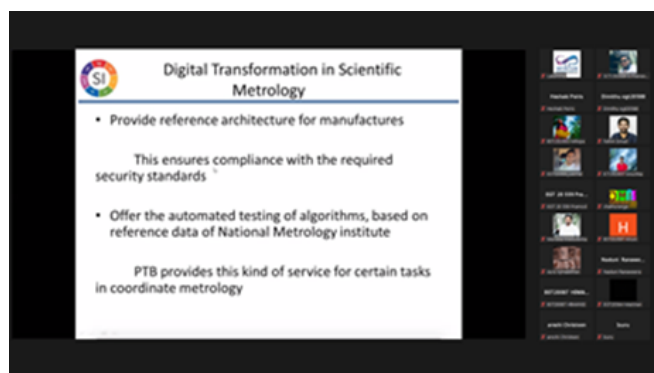
Dr. Rinukshi Wimalasekara and Dr. Ureshani Karunarathna published the following articles in the Vidusara newspaper.

Section E1

Webinars

A webinar on “Generalized Ising Model applied to Model an Auditory Stimulated Brain under Altered States of Consciousness” was held on 8th April 2022 at 6.30 pm with the participation of more than 20 persons. The resource person was Dr. S. Kandeepan from the Department of Physics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The webinar was jointly organized by the SLAAS Section E1 and the Physics Society, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The webinar was coordinated by Dr. W. Wasanthi P. De Silva.

Celebrating the World Metrology day, SLAAS Section E1 organized a special webinar on **"Metrology in the Digital Era"** on 22nd May 2022. The resource person was Dr. G. W. Chithrani Wijesundara, Faculty of Technology, USJ. The event was organized by Prof. P. K. D. D. P. Pitigala, as a customary recurrent event of Section E1 celebrating the World Metrology Day. The World Metrology Day is celebrated worldwide as an annual event in commemoration of the signing of the Metre Convention on 20th May 1875 by representatives of seventeen nations. This year's theme of the global event is also "Metrology in the Digital Era", making a path to develop a discussion on the changes and challenges face in the field of Metrology entering in to the new digital era. In 2018 the SI unit system was redefined in order to face these new challenges. The target audience for this webinar



was undergraduates and general public. This webinar was a very fruitful event filled with

educational information for prospective scientists in the field of metrology and public with interest in metrology and its modern developments.

Workshops

The "Science in Sports" was originally a webinar series that was organized by CPS and Section E1, and have had three webinars so far. As the fourth event, a workshop was organized on the topic **"Cloud Based Machine Learning for Sports Analytics"**. The resource person was Mr. Haritha Thilakarathne, consultant (Data & AI) at Arinco, Australia, who is a data science and machine learning expert equipped with an experience in designing, developing and implementing machine learning based intelligent applications. The workshop was held on the 1st June 2022 at 6:30 pm via Zoom with the participation of around 75 local and foreign participants. The "Science in Sports" programme is coordinated by Dr. Gaya Jayakody and Dr. Rajitha Silva.

A workshop on “Introduction to Arduino” was conducted by Dr. W. Wasanthi De Silva, Senior Lecturer from the Department of Physics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura on 26th April 2022 at the STEAM Education Fair 2022 organized by the Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat in collaboration with Maxibot (Pvt) Ltd. The session was conducted with the demonstrations to motivate the school students in the fields of electronics, programming, and robotics by explaining the real-world applications. Around 50 school students participated at this workshop.



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A ‘Combined Mathematics Teacher Training Workshop Programme’ was organized by the CPS and Section E1 with the assistance of the Mathematics Branch of the Ministry of Education. This teacher training programme is organized for A/L combined mathematics teachers and it will be held in all nine provinces in Sri Lanka. The first programme was conducted in the North Central



province. It was held at the Provincial Education Department Auditorium in

Anuradhapura on 13th June from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Around 40 teachers participated at this programme which was coordinated by Dr. Rajitha Silva, Dr. Gaya Jayakody, and Dr. Sujeewa Wijesiri. The resource persons were Dr. Shelton Perera from University of Rajarata and Dr. Gaya Jayakody from University of Sri Jayewardenepura. This workshop was the first of its kind since it is not only focused on the subject content but also on the pedagogical content specific to Mathematics.

E-paper articles

Online article authored by Dr. Chinthaka De Silva, Senior Research Scientist, ITI on “අධි මෛත්‍රයෙන් යන්න සුපිරි සන්නායක (<https://newswave.lk/33529/>)” was published.

Television and Radio Programmes

Two radio programmes, "*Vidu Asin*", were conducted at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation on 01st June 2022. The importance of scientific observations were explained using ancient astronomical discoveries by Dr. Janaka Adassuriya, Senior Lecturer, Department of Physics, University of Colombo. The latest investigations and the results of the solar system were extensively discussed in the second programme.



tivity of school and university students, a 2-minutes video competition is organized by SLAAS Section E1. Competition is open for registration from 8th June 2022 and the deadline for submission of videos is 15th of August 2022.

Participants can register via <https://forms.gle/U3Y66vJ6QqWKhvHs6>

The guidelines can be found at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Oob4cD8XQ24DwalxLwXGAd6lhk3xcwW?usp=sharing>

Special Events

2-minute Video Competition by SLAAS Section E1

Aiming to promote simple yet deeper understanding of concepts related to Physics, Mathematics, and Statistics while enhancing the crea-

2-MINUTE VIDEO COMPETITION



A two-minute video competition organized by the SLAAS Section E1

Present a concept in Physics, Mathematics, or Statistics, targeting a general audience

Videos can be submitted as an individual, or as a team of 3 members

Competition is open under 5 categories

Category	Description
1	School students; Physics
2	School students; Mathematics
3	University students; Physics
4	University students; Mathematics
5	University students; Statistics

Guidelines: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Oob4cD8XQ24DwalxLwXGAd6lhk3xcwW?usp=sharing>

Register via: <https://forms.gle/U3Y66vJ6QqWKhvHs6>

AWARDS

Plaques & certificates for winners
Certificates for 1st and 2nd runners up
The three best videos will be published on the SLAAS YouTube channel

Registration: 8th June onwards
Video submission deadline: 15th August
Announcement of winners: 15th September
Award ceremony: SLAAS Annual Sessions Dec 2022

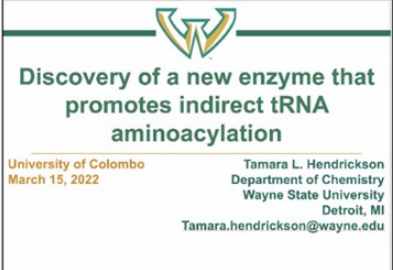
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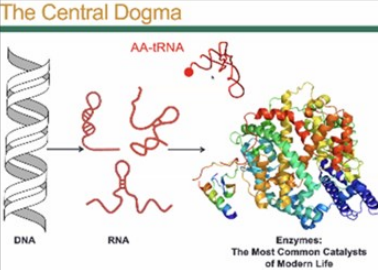
Section E2

'Frontiers in Chemistry Research' Webinar Series

The second of a series of webinars titled 'Frontiers in Chemistry' which showcase cutting-edge scientific research conducted by chemists the world over was organized by SLASS section E2. The webinar was held on Tuesday, 15th March 2022 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am via Zoom. Prof. Tamara Hendrickson, Associate Professor Department of Chemistry, Wayne State University, USA, presented the webinar titled 'Discovery and characterization of a multifunctional enzyme that promotes tRNA aminoacylation'. Prof. Hendrickson discussed about understanding the evolution of direct versus indirect tRNA aminoacylation pathways as well as the mechanisms that are used by *H. pylori* to prevent misacylated tRNAs from entering the ribosome prior to conversion to their accurately aminoacylated counterparts. This webinar was organized and coordinated by Prof. Rohini de Silva and Dr. Gayathri N. Silva. Recording of this webinar is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwT3wkj4b-U>











'Sri Lankan Chemists in Focus' Webinar Series

This series of bimonthly webinars was organized to showcase the achievements of Sri Lankan chemists in the context of scientific research at the international level, in light of aspiring the future chemists of Sri Lanka. The second webinar of the series was presented by Prof. Gomika Udugamasooriya, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical & Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Houston, USA, on Wednesday, 23rd March, 2022, 7:00–8:30 pm via Zoom. Prof. Udugamasooriya presented under the topic 'Novel chemical biology technologies to expedite the drug-lead discovery process'. He discussed the application of biochemical tools in cancer drug-











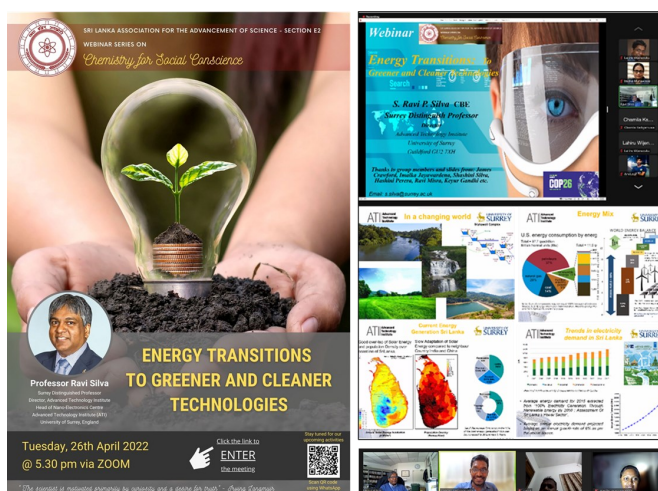
lead discoveries and development of several diagnostic tools. Prof. Udugamasooriya's presentation was very informative, and he explained his research and developments in peptide-based drug developments in cancer diagnosis and detection. This was a successful webinar event and participants gathered deep knowledge on the modern drug discovery process and its applications. The activity was organized and coordinated by Dr. Dinusha Udukala and Dr. Amila Jeewandara. Recording of this webinar is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLt47NGFojY>

The third webinar of this series titled 'White-light Emission from Layered Halide Perovskites' was presented by Prof. Hema Karunadasa, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Senior Fellow at the Precourt Institute for Energy Stanford University in USA on Wednesday, 25th May 2022 at 7:30 pm via Zoom. Prof. Karunadasa's presentation was very enlightening, and she discussed about the self-assembly of white light and perovskite emitters and its applications. This was a very informative webinar and the participants gathered good knowledge on designing white lights emitters, mechanisms and its applications. The activity was organized and coordinated by Dr. Dinusha Udukala and Dr. Amila Jeewandara. Recording of this webinar is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZoG83EsDGk>



'Chemistry for Social Conscience' Webinar Series

A series of webinars titled 'Chemistry for Social Conscience' was organized by SLAAS section E2 in view of improving public awareness on the scientific background of ongoing and contemporary events of social concern. The first webinar of this series was held on Tuesday, 26th April at 5:30 pm via Zoom. Prof. Ravi Silva, Distinguished Professor, Director, Advanced Technology Institute, Head of Nano-Electronics Centre, Advanced Technology Institute (ATI), University of Surrey, Surrey in England presented on 'Energy Transitions to Greener and Cleaner Technologies'. Prof. Silva's talk was very timely and informative. Prof. Silva highlighted useful information regarding world energy balance, trends in electricity demand in Sri Lanka, current energy generation in Sri Lanka, proposed solar power solutions in Sri Lanka, and the viable renewable energy options. The webinar was a successful event where the participants gathered deep knowledge on the energy transitions into green technology. This webinar was organized and coordinated by Dr. Chamila Kadigamuwa and Dr. Lahiru Wijenayaka. Recording of this webinar is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pkb0uS6V2MI>



'Pathway to a Successful Career in Chemistry' Webinar Series

The first webinar of a series of webinars titled 'Pathway to a Successful Career in Chemistry' was organized by SLAAS Section E2. This webinar was focusing the undergraduates, temporary lecturers, demonstrators and probationary lecturers at Sri Lankan higher education institutes who aspire to pursue higher education in Chemistry. The webinar was held on Monday, 2nd May at 4:00 pm *via* Zoom. Prof. K. M. Nalin de Silva, FRSC, Chair Senior Professor of Chemistry and Head, Department of Chemistry, University of Colombo presented on 'So, What Comes Next?: Envision the Opportunities that Lie Ahead'. His talk was aspiring and dealt with the potential higher education opportunities and ensuing career prospects in Chemistry. The webinar was a successful event and more than 200 participants were in attendance. The participants were able to gather a good understanding in terms of the current and future potential in different areas of Chemistry, leading them towards a successful career in Chemistry. This webinar was organized and coordinated by Dr. Laksiri Weerasinghe and Dr. Imalka Munaweera. Recording of this webinar is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yt0-MLRjcX0>

Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science
SLAAS Section E2

Webinar series on
PATHWAY TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN CHEMISTRY

Aspiring on the potential higher education opportunities and ensuing career prospects in chemistry

Webinar 1

So, what comes next? : Envision the opportunities that lie ahead

Professor K. M. Nalin de Silva, FRSC

Chair Senior Professor of Chemistry and Head
Department of Chemistry
University of Colombo

Monday, 2nd May 2022
@ 4.00 pm via ZOOM

Please see email or the flyer attached for the meeting ZOOM link

Pathway to a successful career in chemistry

K.M. Nalin de Silva FRSC
Chair Professor
Head / Department of Chemistry
University of Colombo

Technologies that will shape up the planet in next 25 years

1. Biotechnology
2. Nanotechnology (Materials Science)
3. Artificial Intelligence
4. Robotics
5. Internet of Things (IoT)

What jobs do Chemist do?

- A-Levels in Science
- BSc/MSc in Chemistry
- PhD in Chemistry
- Post-doctoral position
- Industrial Researcher

Technician

Research (Industry or Academia)
Teacher

Research (Industry or Academia)

Industrial Researcher
Academic Researcher

Group Leader / Team Leader

Why a Degree in Chemistry or related discipline

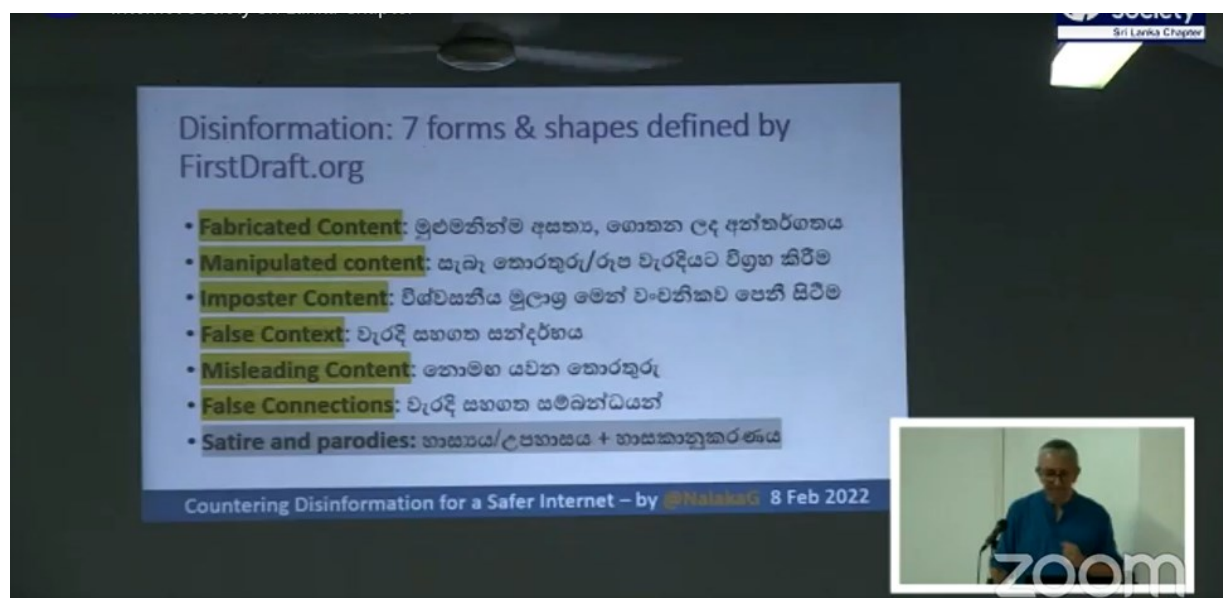
- Training
- Versatility - Flexibility in a changing world
- Job "Security" - Promotion Prospects
- Travel - International opportunities
- Meet People - Work in a professional team
- Scientific and technical

Participants: Nalin De Silva, Lalitha Wijetayake, Manesha Fernando, Laksiri Weerasinghe, Amila Jeevawardana, Chinthaka Withanage, Darshani, Nipuni, H.A. Wijayaratne, Duleeka Disanayake

Section E3

Safer Internet Day Celebrated by the Internet Society Sri Lanka Chapter

The Safer Internet Day was celebrated on Tuesday, 8th February 2022 across the globe with the theme of "Together for a better Internet". Section E3 of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science in collaboration with the Internet Society Sri Lanka Chapter, hosted an event to commemorate Safer Internet Day in Sri Lanka on 8th February 2022 at the SLAAS HQ auditorium from 2:30 to 5:30 pm. The event was also live-streamed via Facebook and YouTube.



A panel of eminent speakers gathered to share their perspectives, experiences, and ideas in order to raise awareness about where we are as a country and how we should proceed. The guest speakers were Mr. Piyadasa Ratnasinghe, a veteran in the field of Television and Electronic Media, and a former Deputy Director General at the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC), a standing pillar in the history of SLRC and SLBC; Mr. Nalaka Gunawardene, a science writer and media analyst; and Mr. N. Deenadayalan, an experienced information security specialist over a wide range of cyber security domains and a media spokesman for Sri Lanka CERT. The speakers from the organizing committee included Prof. Manuj Weerasinghe, Senior Professor, Consultant Community Physician and the Head of the Department of Community Medicine at the University of Colombo and General President of SLAAS; Prof. Lasith Gunawardena, Professor in IT from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and a member of the Internet Society; and Dr. Rasika Dayarathne, senior lecturer from the University of Colombo and the Vice President of the Sri Lanka Chapter of the Internet Society. The welcome speech was given by Dr. Menaka Ranasinghe, Senior Lecturer from the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Piyadasa Ratnasinghe spoke on ethics in the internet and social media and shared his unparalleled knowledge through a series of mini-stories gathered based on experiences from his radio and television journey. Mr. Nalaka Gunawardene presented and spoke on misinformation and disinformation. Mr. N. Deenadayalan, spoke about measures taken by Sri Lanka CERT to make the internet safer and he also described where we stand as a country, stating that we have moved from 69th position (2019) to 89th position (2020) based on the IDU's Global Cyber Security Index-2021. Dr. Rasika Dayarathne also discussed about global initiatives to make the internet safer. A panel discussion was held as the concluding element of the Safer Internet Day. The vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Prabhath Samarasinghe, and tokens of appreciation

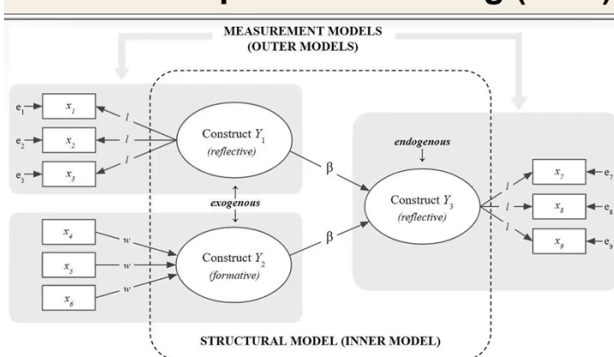
were handed over to panelists by ISOC Program Chair Ms. Pushpa Poojani. FOS Media provided live streaming media coverage for the entire event .

PLS-SEM for Quantitative Research

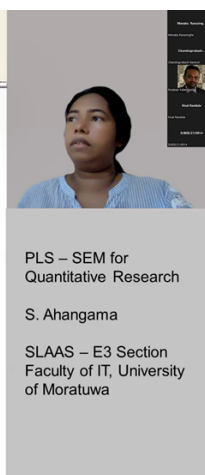
Section E3 of SLAAS hosted a webinar on "PLS-SEM for Quantitative Research", on 9th June 2022, from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm *via* Zoom. The session was conducted by Dr. Supunmali Ahangama, Senior Lecturer from the Faculty of Information Technology, University of Moratuwa. The event was conducted in Sinhala to raise awareness of various quantitative research methodologies among Information System researchers among local participants. More than 100 people attended the webinar.

In addition to technical components, she noted that it is necessary to address non-technical components known as behavioural approaches such as changes in attitudes, management and organizational policies, when creating various IT systems. SEM can be used to analyze complex survey data to better understand the influence of individuals, groups, and organizations on system development, and *vice versa*. She demonstrated how SmartPLS may be used to undertake a quantitative analysis of survey data during the webinar. Dr. Menaka Ranasinghe, a member of the SLAAS – Section E3 Committee and a Senior Lecturer, Open University of Sri Lanka welcomed the speaker and proposed the vote of thanks.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)



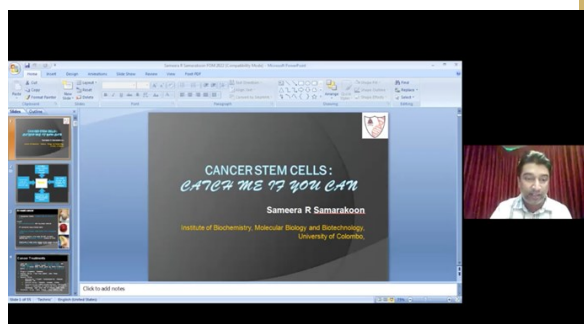
Legate, A. E., Hair, J. F., Chretien, J. L., & Risher, J. J. (2021). PLS-SEM: Prediction-oriented solutions for HRD researchers. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21466>



Committee for Popularization of Science

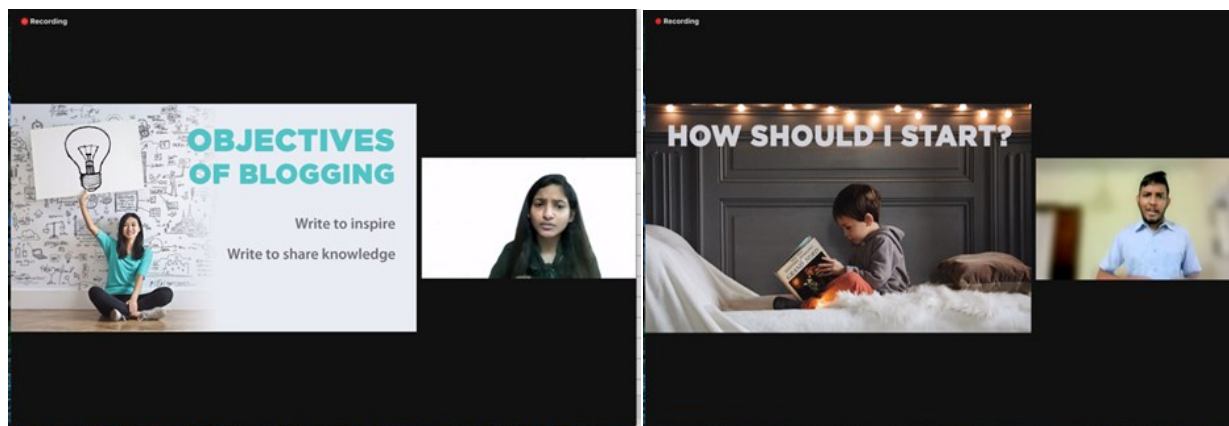
Programs for particular target groups

The Committee for the Popularization of Science is organizing programs for various target groups this year. Under this category, a webinar titled “Cancer Stem Cells: Catch me if you can” was held on 16th March 2022 by Dr. Sameera R. Samarakoon, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo. The target group of this webinar was University undergraduate students. This webinar was followed by a question and answer session for which many participants were actively participated. This program was coordinated and moderated by Dr. Jayangika Dahanayake, Chair of CPS 2022.



Wednesday, 16th March 2022
 7.00 – 8.00 p.m. (via Zoom)

An interactive session on the basics of blogging was organized on 21st May 2022 for interested participants including academics, postgraduates, and undergraduates of different Universities. The resource persons were Ms. Ramalka Kasige and Mr. Uditha Weerasighe. Ms. Ramalka Kasige is a freelance journalist, associate editor of the Sri Lankan Scientist and the editor of FOS media blog and other blogs, while Mr. Uditha Weerasighe is a web administrator of several non-profit blogs. This activity was coordinated by Dr. Aashani Tillekaratne. This activity was jointly organized by CPS and Section E2 of SLAAS.



A webinar on “Preparing a scientific presentation from a research study” was conducted on 23rd April 2022 by Dr. Kasuni Akalanka, Senior Lecturer, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The target group of this webinar was University undergraduate students. This webinar was followed by a question and answer session in which many participants were actively participated. This program was coordinated in collaboration with Section A of SLAAS.

Science Promotional Programmes for School Children

The Committee for the Popularization of Science together with the Science division of Ministry of Education is organizing programmes for selected schools, which have displayed poor results in science subjects. Several programmes will be conducted with the intention of popularizing and promoting science among those identified schools. The importance of conducting a baseline study to clearly understand why the schools perform poorly in science stream was identified. A questionnaire was prepared by CPS for both teachers and students to identify the current gaps, which will assist in realizing the attempts that can be taken to improve physical and human resources in schools to promote Science. This activity is coordinated by Prof. Bandunee Athapattu.

Programs for school teachers

A Teacher Training Programme for GCE Advanced Level teachers of Combined Mathematics was organized by the CPS and Section E1 with the assistance of the Mathematics Branch of the Ministry of Education.

WEBINAR

Organised by
Section A of The Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS)

Saturday 23rd April 2022 from 8 to 11 am

Preparing a scientific presentation from a research study
Dr Kasuni Akalanka
 Senior lecturer
 University of Sri Jayewardenepura
 Sri Lanka

Delivering presentations at different scientific forums
Dr. Hemali Jayakody
 Consultant Community Physician
 Family Health Bureau
 Ministry of Health
 Sri Lanka

REGISTER NOW FOR FREE

CLICK HERE

Webinar Coordinator: Ms. Cinthuja Pathmanathan
 Committee member- SLAAS- Section- A
 Tel: +94-772722591

Questions and Answers

Targeted groups:
 Undergraduate students
 Graduates
 Postgraduate students
 Any interested participants

An effort to instil in young minds, an unparalleled curiosity about science!
Formulated by Section E2 of SLAAS and available for purchase at the SLAAS office..

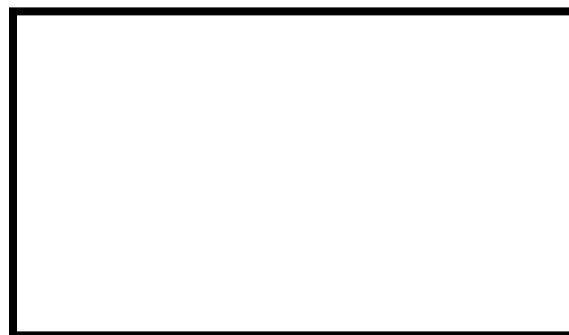


A science kit where about 20 simple and exciting experiments are housed in an attractive carry-on box. It serves as a do-it-yourself model to a laboratory setting where instructions are available.

For more details please visit : <https://www.slaas.lk/Science Kit.php>

Or contact Dr Laksiri Weerasinghe (mobile: 0775401882)

to



Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science
"Vidya Mandiraya"
120/10
Wijerama Mawatha
Colombo 07